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CHRISTIAN COURIER

Pro-life activist accepts jail to protect unborn

Jenna Craine

Pro-life demonstrator Linda Gibbons is currently behind bars in the Vanier Centre for Women in Milton, Ontario, where she's been since January of 2009. The 62-year-old great-grandmother has been arrested over twenty times in the past sixteen years, spending more than 550 days consecutively in prison. Her crime? Praying outside a downtown Toronto abortion facility.

Gibbons' prayers violated a 1994 injunction that created a bubble zone around several Toronto abortion facilities. Believing she has a duty to defend the unborn, she has been arrested repeatedly, released from prison, and arrested again days later. Gibbons could be released from her current sentence on a mere $500 bail, but she refuses to consent to a bail condition that requires her to promise not to go near an abortion facility. In a recent interview, she says that such a promise would be "compromise and complicity with evil."

The right to pray?

Some people see Gibbons as a zealot or even a fanatic. Celia Posyniak, a director of an abortion facility in Calgary, told *The National Post* that Gibbons' prayer vigil is "creepy" and states that she "intimidates" women. "Linda Gibbons has a right to her opinion . . . [Yet] there is a rule of law and she's thumbing her nose at that." Gibbons' lawyer Daniel Santoro, however, argues that she has a right to free speech. "All she does is try to talk to people and if they don't want to listen, then fine," he explained.

Besides being a silent advocate for free speech, Ms. Gibbons has been heralded by the pro-life community as a prisoner of conscience. Retired teacher John Bulsza of London, Ontario, believes that if other pro-life activists had protested with Gibbons, the case would be "history. . . . She's our

Pro-life *continued on page 2*

12,500 pro-lifers joined the 2010 national March for Life in Ottawa. LIFESITENEWS

America's First Lady puts family first

Emily Wierenga

With the number of overweight children in North America doubling over the past 20 years, obesity has become a national epidemic. The issue has implications for the long-term health of North Americans. Parents – even famous ones – are starting to take note.

Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama considers herself to be more than the First African American First Lady, a graduate of Harvard Law School or a public servant. First and foremost, Michelle says, she is a mother.

Since entering the White House, Michelle has sought to help working women find balance between home and career. She's also sought to enable the poor to enter college. And most recently, she's focused on creating awareness of child obesity through her "Let's Move" anti-obesity campaign.

Healthy love

"We want to eliminate this problem of childhood obesity in a generation," the First Lady has said. "We want our kids to face a different and more optimistic future in terms of their lifespan."

With one in three children being overweight or obese, an annual amount of $150 billion treating obesity-related illnesses, and 38 states boasting adult obesity rates above 25 percent, Michelle is hoping to catalyze a change in America's appetite as well as its attitude.

The campaign was inspired early this year, when her daughters' health was brought into question by their paediatrician. "In my eyes, I thought my children were perfect," Michelle said. "I didn't see the changes." The doctor "cautioned me that I had to take a look at my own children's BMI," or body mass index, she told *The Associated Press*.

"Even though I wasn't exactly sure at that time what I was supposed to do with this information about my children's BMI, I knew

Family *continued on page 2*

News

Pro-life *continued*

Gandhi, and we're letting her take the fall for the rest of us."

Gibbons is more than willing to sacrifice herself for the pro-life cause. She is a committed Christian who believes she is doing the Lord's work by accepting imprisonment for the unborn. In fact, she believes she has saved three babies from abortion during her incarceration.

Yet a more personal reason motivates Gibbons: she had an abortion over 40 years ago. She was a single mother on social assistance, already raising a young daughter. She felt incapable of having another child. She experienced immense suffering from the abortion, until she found healing after becoming a Christian. With her conversion came the belief that she had a personal responsibility to save women from making the devastating choice of abortion that she so deeply regrets.

Fighting the law

Now Gibbons' fight is involved with quashing the injunction itself. Although the injunction was issued from a civil court, Gibbons has repeatedly been tried in a criminal court. Her lawyer claims this is due to the fact that it has yet to be affirmed by the civil courts whether the injunction is necessary. It was originally put in place to protect women seeking abortions, as well as the facility's staff, from threats and harassment. The Criminal Code, however, already offers protection for anyone from violence and threats. Thus Gibbons and her lawyer

Ultrasound at 12 weeks.

are seeking to overturn that injunction so that peaceful protesters are given their right to free speech. If necessary, they will take her case to the Supreme Court.

To those involved with pro-life work, Gibbons is a heroine. She sees things more simply. In an interview with Bruce Ward

Image of baby in utero.

in the *Ottawa Citizen*, Gibbons says, "I feel like a very ordinary Christian doing a very ordinary thing."

Jenna Craine lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia with her husband and son, Noah.

Family *continued*

that I had to do something. I had to lead our family to a different way."

Over the next few months she made small but significant changes, including no weekday TV, healthier portion sizes, low-fat milk, water bottles in lunch boxes, and plenty of fruit and vegetables.

"It was really very minor stuff, but these small changes resulted in some really significant improvements," Michelle said. "It was so significant that the next time we visited our paediatrician, he was amazed. He looked over the girls' charts and he said, 'What on earth are you doing?'" Michelle said that this is the message she hopes to share in her anti-obesity campaign; that "small changes can lead to big results."

Let's Move is a nationwide campaign targeting four pillars: informing parents about nutrition and exercise; improving the quality of food in schools; making healthy foods more affordable and accessible for families and focusing more on physical education.

"Because what we're going to be fighting for, for our kids, is what we have to fight for, for all of our kids," Michelle told *Newsweek*. "They have to be center in this society and this nation. We have to put their education, their needs, their well-being, first and foremost."

Born into love

Michelle's role model is her own 72-year-old mother, Marian Shields Robinson, who now serves as caregiver, or "First Granny," to the president's two daughters. Raised in a one-bedroom apartment in the South Shore community of Chicago, 46-year-old Michelle and her brother, Craig – now the men's basketball couch at Oregon State University – were nurtured and loved by Marian and her husband, Fraser, a city water plant employee who died in 1990.

The First Lady describes growing up in a "conventional home" with "the mother at home, the father works, you have dinner around the table. I had a very stable, conventional upbringing, and that felt very safe to me."

Despite having multiple sclerosis, Fraser never missed a day of work, serving as a hero to his offspring. His wife stayed home with the children, filling the house with laughter and lessons and love. Both valued hard work, independence and honesty, and took pride in their jobs. "That was what they enjoyed; it [gave them] a sense of meaning," Michelle stated.

Finding love

Having mentored Barack in 1989 while working at a downtown law firm, Sidley & Austin, Michelle was impressed by his ability to connect with people. They were married in 1992, and had their first daughter in 1998. With Barack being a political figure, Michelle was forced to re-examine her view of family. She had to learn to create a traditional family-feel in an untraditional environment.

"I had to give up some of my notions, and so did he," said Michelle, who also gave up her six-figure job with the University of Chicago Hospital when Barack assumed presidency. "That's part of being married; everyone makes compromises. Once I got a sense that the family we were creating was going to be good for our children, I realized that it wasn't exactly what I had, but that our children are thriving and they feel loved. Part of my fear was: 'Are my kids going to be O.K.? If they don't see their dad at night, like I did, will they feel he loves them?'"

Making love work

And Barack, whose own father was absent growing up, and whose mother traveled the globe for months at a time, has reassured her that they will.

"(We're) just continuing to make sure that our first priority is getting them into schools that make sense for them, making sure that they have activities that they care about, that we're there for them to help them with their homework, that we go to their parent-teacher conferences, that we go to all their events," Michelle has said.

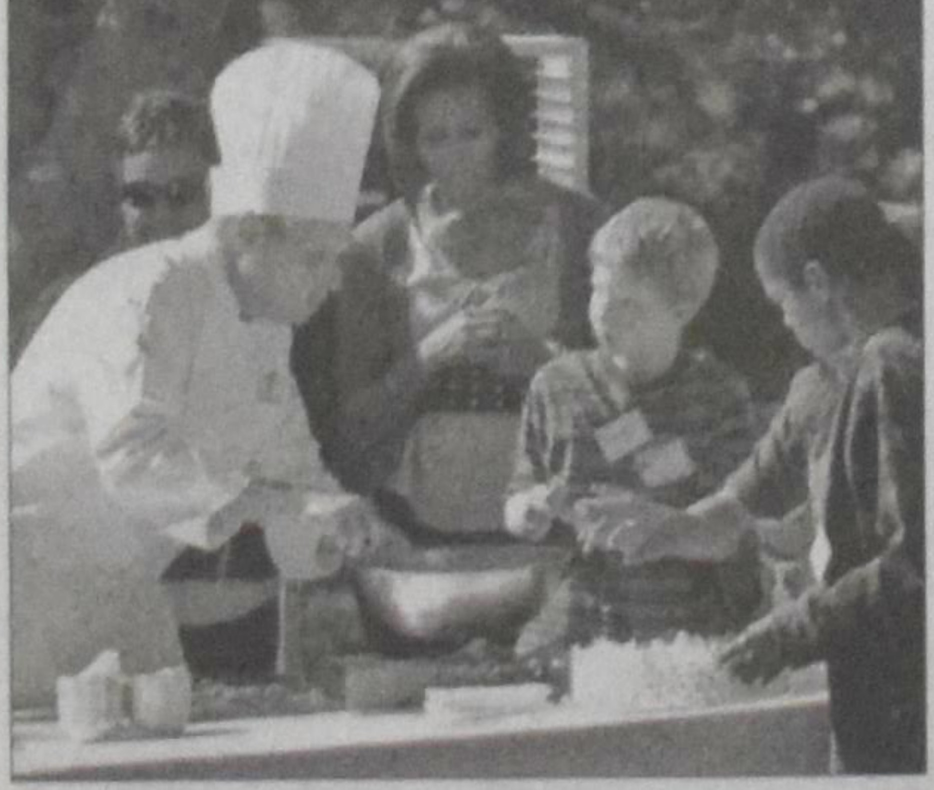
"It's important to continue to do that, no matter what their father's job is. And he has to continue to make them a priority even as he's the leader of the free world. I think that's an important thing for him to model for others. It's this notion that if *he* can do it, then we all have to really fight for it."

In an effort to help establish this nurturing environment for 11-year-old Malia Ann and nine-year-old Natasha, Michelle has not only sought the advice of former First Ladies Laura Bush, Rosalynn Carter and Hillary Rodham Clinton, but has invited her mother, a mainstay for the family during the presidential campaign, to move in with them.

Ensuring they get to school, piano lessons and dancing lessons, as well as cooking their meals, running baths and getting them to bed on time, Marian helps to keep the girls' life as normal as possible in spite of a house that hosts both a bowling alley and a personal cinema.

"My first priority," Michelle says on *BarackObama.com*, "will always be to make sure that our girls are healthy and grounded."

Emily Wierenga is an author, artist and freelance writer who lives with her husband and son in Neerlandia, AB. For more information, visit www.emilywierenga.com.



Weighing in:

– Obesity rates in children have almost tripled in the last 25 years.
– 26 percent of Canadian children ages 2-17 are currently overweight (*The Childhood Obesity Foundation)*.
– in 2004, the highest rates of overweight youth in Canada tended to be in the Atlantic provinces (*StatsCan)*.
– In 2010, an estimated 42 million children under five were estimated to be overweight worldwide (*World Health Organization)*.
– The problem is global; in Thailand, for example, the prevalence of obesity in 5-to-12 year olds rose from 12 percent to 16 percent in just two years (*World Health Organization*).

News

The changing countryside

When I get round to baling hay on hot, muggy days, I often think how hay-making has changed since I was a boy. I wonder what my father and the farmers of his generation would think if they could see how farmers speedily cut down entire fields of hay. Discbines and self-propelled swathers mow down large acreages in no time. That's something you didn't see eight or 10 years ago when haybines were the popular machine of the day. Farmers back then would cut just enough that could be baled in one or two days. It meant cutting 10-20 swaths around a large field. The remainder was cut on two or three days provided the weather looked promising.

I'm guessing it was 45 years ago that haybines first appeared on area farms. The New Holland haybine was a great invention. There was a seven and a nine-foot cut. Later 12-foot models were made. Forage was cut, crimped and swathed in one trip over the field. Looking back now they were slow machines, they plugged easily and were a pain in the neck. Pain in the back, too – the operator was always twisting in his seat looking over the right shoulder. Ten years ago I bought a self-propelled swather. No looking over the shoulder.

Prior to the haybine, farmers cut hay with a mower. Alfalfa hay was then crimped by a crimper or commonly referred to as a conditioner. That meant two trips over the field before the hay was raked.

This generation of young (dairy) farmers is different from their fathers and grandfathers. They have larger acreages to work and they don't want to be haying all summer. They also want to get the first cut off early and get a second cut and maybe even a third. Livestock farmers know that second and third cut hay is high in protein. They have discbines that can zip forages down fast, even when it's wet.

Self-propelled forage harvester.

Many large dairy farm operations get their haylage done by a custom operator. They cut 60 - 70 acres or more at one time. A huge rake puts two or three swaths together. The next day a powerful, self-propelled forage harvester and a few dump trucks clean up the entire field.

If they're not making haylage, they make round or large square silage bales and wrap them. It's also a speedy operation.

Gone from the landscape are the automatic stookers. They were a common sight before the round balers came on the scene. The stooker was bolted on the back of a baler and stooked six bales, which were later picked up with a stooker fork on a front-end loader. The (Allied) stookers didn't always place the top bale in the right position. That was bad if it rained. Small square balers and the bale thrower wagons are seldom seen nowadays. They are relics of the past just as the mowers and steel-wheeled hay loaders that preceded them.

The once popular hayfield for fodder is becoming a relic, especially in places where there are no livestock farms or riding horses. Hay and pasture fields (almost everywhere) have been taken over by corn and soybeans – particularly soybeans. Many small and odd size fields are now in grain corn. That's no wonder. With beef cattle numbers down considerably in eastern Ontario, the landscape is not dotted with round bales like it was five or 10 years ago. You have to drive all the way to the New Liskeard and Temiskaming area of northern Ontario to see large numbers of cattle grazing in pasture fields.

On hot days I enjoy raking hay at 6 a.m. with my older model open-air tractor. Not only am I saving the leaves (leaves fall off when hay is raked in the afternoon when dry), it's cool and fresh out in the morning.

The rake pictured rakes into a rope-like windrow but it dries more slowly and because the hay has been rolled around it's harder to round bale. Although Maynard used that type years ago, now he has a French-made fluff up rake that makes the hay stand up in a windrow.

Maynard van der Galien (maynard@renfrew.net) *keeps a little beef herd on his Renfrew-area farm. His biggest field of 175 acres is rented out to a cash-cropper who grows wheat, soybeans, sunflowers and corn.*

Country living
Maynard van der Galien

All roads lead to . . . where?

Principalities & Powers
David T. Koyzis

Virtually every country in the world has a capital city, and a few, such as Bolivia, Burma and South Africa, have more than one. In some countries this city dominates not only the political life of the nation, but also its cultural and economic life. The capital city's dialect is the official version of the country's language, and anyone wishing to get anywhere must abandon the provincial hinterlands, move to the capital and learn to speak "properly."

The Roman Empire had its centre in the Eternal City, the seat of the emperor. Centuries thereafter the Eastern Roman, i.e., Byzantine, Empire revolved around Constantinople, which ceased being an imperial capital as recently as 1922. To this day Greeks still refer to the city on the Golden Horn as simply The City (Η Πόλη), as if there could be no other.

In the modern era, a number of western European monarchs sought to bring about a similar Roman-style centralization within their realms. Louis XIV broke the power of the local nobility in France and fashioned for himself, not only a palace at Versailles to enhance his kingly glory, but also an entire administration, culture and speech that would come to carry considerable prestige across Europe. Parisian French supplanted the other languages and dialects of the realm and became serviceable to the creation of a self-conscious nation-state. Even today there is a profound sense in which France *is* Paris.

Many centres

Not so with Germany and Italy. Germany and Italy were united only in the late 19th century and thus became what might be called polycentric countries. Certainly Berlin was the focal point of the old Prussian realm, but it was rivalled by such important western cities as Munich, Frankfurt and Stuttgart. Similarly, in Italy Rome was controlled by the papacy, while cultural, economic and political power lay elsewhere, for example, Venice, Florence and Milan.

Canada and the United States are similarly polycentric. Not all roads necessarily lead in the same direction.

I have lived in Hamilton, Ontario, for nearly a quarter century. Hamilton is historically the Steel City, although the traditional manufacturing sector is no longer the backbone of the city's economy. Hamilton has its own Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, along with Theatre Aquarius, Opera Hamilton and the Art Gallery of Hamilton. It has more than one sport team, including the Bulldogs and (for now at least) the Tiger Cats. A summer jazz festival is held in downtown Hess Street. Hamilton has two universities, at one of which I teach, and one community college. The Niagara Escarpment and the Bruce Trail system provide ample recreational opportunities for Hamiltonians.

Yes, Ottawa is Canada's capital. And Toronto, which is Canada's largest city and calls itself a world-class city, is not too far away. Many of us commute there for work, but Hamilton is far from being simply a suburb of Canada's largest city. While I love Toronto and enjoyed the years I lived there, Canada is definitely *not* Toronto. Cities throughout the country have similar cultural and educational opportunities as Hamilton, and that is as it should be.

Any country which forces its citizens to gravitate towards a single capital city will be too top heavy and will discourage the development of lively local cultures and economies. I would suggest that the health of a country can be measured by the extent to which it is polycentric, that is, the degree to which its various cities and regions develop their own distinctive economic, cultural and political lives.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and blogs at: http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/.

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Editorials

The future of journalism in the free frontier

Angela Reitsma Bick

As school begins again, a pedagogical discussion is resuming in the rooms across Canada where staff and faculty meet. Whether they're in charge of JKs or PhDs, educators wonder: Is new technology making my students dumber? It's tempting to say *yes*. But let's step back a little. Put it into perspective. John Franklin Genung of Amherst College worries about what he calls the "problem of poor student writing" – sound familiar? He taught 116 years ago. Do today's teenagers sound like "murderers of the spoken tongue"? That's what Professor Clark of Hillyer College thought too . . . in 1958.

Another discussion has been ongoing in newsrooms across this country. Whether they're putting out church newsletters or national papers, editors wonder: Is new technology making newspapers obsolete? It's tempting to say *yes*. But let's step back a little. Put it into perspective. As Jewish-American author Dara Horn says, "People are very alarmist, but changes [like the internet] have happened many times before. The change from scroll to book upset many Jews."

It's true that the last five years have been tumultuous for newsprint. In April 2009, the *New York Times*' top editor wrote that "saving the *New York Times* now ranks with saving Darfur." But even while familiar newspapers fold, our "appetite for the news has become insatiable," according to *Slate* magazine. The format may be changing along with technology, but – in a sea of information and opinion – reliable reporting and insightful editorializing are more valuable than ever.

Curbing the internet explorer

In the 1990s, the internet seemed like a vast ocean of free stuff, from books to music. A recent issue of *The Atlantic* magazine, however, includes two articles that foreshadow a tidal shift in that free ocean: "The closing of the digital frontier" and "Information wants to be paid for" (July/August 2010). These articles argue that as the number of newspapers shrinks, "reliable and reported information from trusted sources will remain valuable but may become harder to find, which means that some folks are likely to be willing to pay for good sources of it." In other words, the future of the newspaper is not as bleak as everyone assumes. The internet's founding principle, which defended "the unencumbered flow of everything," undermines traditional notions of ownership and copyright. That system is hard to sustain and may be changing. By charging users who go online, smart phone pricing plans are already shrinking the boundaries of the free frontier.

It reminds me of a friend with a piano she didn't want. She advertised it as "free" on an online exchange site. Even with a picture of the attractive instrument, no one responded. She changed the listing to $25. Still no response. When she asked for $50 she received two calls and one visit, but it wasn't until the price went up to $100 that her piano sold. Capitalism 101: If it's free, it must be worthless. Anything valuable has a price attached. If the internet learns that lesson as it ages, it could revitalize newspapers and magazines. As *The Atlantic* points out, "people have already begun subscribing to publications on the Amazon Kindle, even though they could get them for free online."

Pass the *Post*, please

You could say that I've been in the newspaper business my whole life. I sent letters written in columns to my college-age sisters. My dad and I delivered *The Canadian Statesman* to houses up and down our neighbourhood. I worked with a friend to mimeograph the student newspaper during lunch breaks in high school. And in university, my co-editor and I used hot glue to paste each article onto the storyboard before driving the unwieldy thing to the publisher. The methods of production have changed, but the definition of a good newspaper has not: It's a window on the world worth paying for, whether that window is on a screen or on paper.

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A proposition on Proposition 8

Brett Alan Dewing

Recently, *Christian Courier* ran a news story about U.S. District Chief Judge Vaughn R. Walker's ruling that California's controversial Proposition 8 (which defines marriage as the joining of one man and one woman) is unconstitutional, thereby once again allowing Californian same-sex couples to marry.

There may be no less controversial topic in our society today, especially within the church, as the rights of gays and lesbians. In a country such as Canada that allows same-sex couples equal marriage rights, we may feel the issue is less pressing. After all, legal policy is in place and will not likely be changed. But the ethical and moral questions raised by the topic of gay marriage are all-too-pertinent to today's Canadian Church.

My initial response

For my purposes here, I am not speaking of the rights of gay men and women to hold church office or be granted congregational membership. I am simply speaking of the civic right of homosexual couples to marry. And when civic laws come up against religious beliefs, the collision is never tidy.

My personal initial reaction is to uphold the right of gays and lesbians to marry in a civic ceremony. My own life experience plays a large part in this initial position. I am a post-gay man who once wanted nothing more than to find a husband. I have also been surrounded by a culture of tolerance throughout my education. Not only that, but several of my close friends over the years (including my first girlfriend) are now in civically recognized same-sex marriages.

My position when questioned about gay rights has always started with a simple tenet: if someone is not a Christian, their sexual practices will not bring them any closer or farther from the heart of God. Non-Christian gays are no more sinful nor depraved than non-Christian heterosexuals. If the discussion ends there, I am happy to leave it there, with the affirmation that I am concerned with the individual's response to Christ, not to any particular moral law, citing 1 Cor. 5:12: "What business is it of mine to judge outside of the church? Are you not to judge those inside?"

If questioned further, this position gets much more complicated. When the topic of Christians in gay marriages comes up, my initial tenet does little good. Sooner or later, I have to take stand on whether Christian couples of the same sex (and therefore, their secular neighbours) may be married in the sight of God and not just the state.

And when that question comes up, I can answer nothing other than a firm but loving "no."

Civic and religious arguments

I would, in many ways, like nothing better than to champion the rights of gays and lesbians. I wish that I could read the Scriptures under the umbrage of "liberation theology" and other mindsets that see homosexual relations at no loggerheads with biblical revelation. Believe me, I have tried. But I simply cannot read anything in God's Word that would allow for any homosexual act to be blessed by him.

The justifications and theological arguments are legion, and there would not be space here to address them even if I wanted to focus in that direction. The civic arguments against same-sex marriage are also many. Perhaps the most compelling to me is that of the "slippery slope" – or, as one friend calls it, "the ever-expanding acronym." By now GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered) is a commonly used term, but in many subcultures (particularly the GLBT subculture), that acronym has been steadily expanding over the years to include transsexuals, zoosexuals, "two-spirited," queer, intersex, asexual, questioning, polyamorous, transvestite, fetishist, fluid, pansexual, queer-identified and omnisexual. I am truly surprised that no version of pedophilia has entered the equation (assuming a distinction exists between pedophilia and child sexual abuse similar to the current differentiation of monogamous gay sex and sodomy). Truly, once one enters the ever-expanding acronym, it is a slippery slope indeed.

Suburbs of Babylon

After all of this, what it comes down to is something akin to the current debates over sharia law: should we, as Christians, have a separate law from that of the state(s) in which we reside? Can we legally operate in accordance with Paul's mandate in 1 Corinthians that we are not to judge those outside the faith while having a duty to judge those within our body of believers?

There are a lot of questions and perspectives to consider here, but we are all pushed to either a "yes" or "no" – knowing that, more than a superficial answer,

No CRC connection

The Kairos Palestine document that Mr. P. Aalhuizen refers to in his recent letter to *Christian Courier* (August 9), has nothing to do with the KAIROS organization of which the Christian Reformed Church is a member. "KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives" is a collaborative effort of 11 Christian denominations – including the Christian Reformed Church – that seeks in unity to promote justice in Canada and around the world. KAIROS has long been an advocate for reconciliation between Jews and Palestinians. But KAIROS in Canada had no part in the writing of "Kairos Palestine" document, and the link between our KAIROS and this document should not be made.

That's not to say that the "Kairos Palestine" document should not be carefully read and that the cries of our Palestinian brothers and sisters should not be heard. It begins with this sentence: "We, a group of Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in our country, under the Israeli occupation, with a cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God ever vigilant, in God's divine providence for all the inhabitants of this land."

I encourage all readers of *Christian Courier* to find and read the "Kairos Palestine" document and to discuss it within the family circle, small groups, and congregations.

Rev. Bruce Adema
Director of Canadian Ministries, CRCNA

Why no concern for Palestinians?

I can sleep a lot better now thanks to Harry Antonides' *Israel besieged (The Public Square, July 12.)* and *CC* reader P. Aalhuizen's letter (*Stand With Israel*, Aug 9).

I became familiar with the pain felt by Palestinian Christians in Israel through the stories and tears personally expressed by an Israeli tour guide, himself a "resident" of Bethlehem. In his book, *Blood Brothers*, Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Christian and archbishop of the Melkite Catholic Church, writes, "Suddenly I knew that the first step toward reconciling Jew and Palestinian was the restoration of human dignity. Justice and righteousness were what I had been hungering and thirsting for. This was the choice that ran like a straight path between violent opposition and calcified, passive non-resistance" (pages 153-4). Our tour guide asked this soul-searching question: "Why is it that the Western Christian Church gives all of its support to Israel while showing little or no concern for Palestinian Christians?"

Now I have an answer: "Be fair-minded," "Israel has the right to defend itself," and "Opposition to Zionism is simply an attempt to hinder the fulfillment of God's Word."

Thanks for helping us out.

Jim Poelman
Sarnia, Ontario

Can the human mind go blind?

My schedule slip on the kitchen counter reads: 9:45 Balance Class; 10:30 haircut; 11:00 Residents Council meeting. Priority point: haircut.

At 10:25 I walk from my balance class into the beauty salon across the hall. "Have a seat," Christine tells me; "I'll be with you in a few minutes." I slide into the swivel chair; put my glasses on the shelf in front of me; put my hearing aid into my pocket; then watch with interest how Christine applies about a hundred tiny rollers (or, so it appears to me) into the silver hair of another lady. After she helps the lady move to the dryer, Christine comes to my chair and with nimble skill gives me a quick haircut. I pay my fee, put on my glasses, get hold of my walker, and head for the elevator for a brief return to my unit on the second floor before coming back down to attend the Residents Council meeting.

As I stand in the lobby waiting for the elevator for my trip downstairs to the meeting, I see my next-door neighbour Mrs. B. in her wheelchair. Mr. L. stands beside her holding up a pair of glasses for her inspection. I hear him say something to the effect that he had not been able to "fix them properly." Aha! Mr. L. fixes glasses, I am thinking as I enter the elevator. I should ask him to fix mine too. (The frame of my glasses has been crooked since my fall last year, but as it did not interfere with my eyesight, I never had them fixed).

At 11:00 o'clock I join my fellow residents at the Residents Council meeting. Cheryl, the head nurse, presides over the meeting by standing in front of us. Then I notice a strange thing. From my seat in the back row, my view of Cheryl is blurred. I see her as through a flood of tears. Something strange is happening to my vision. I can still read the printed agenda, so my close view is fine. It's the change in distance view that starts to worry me. My worries multiply when later, sitting in my lazy chair at home watching the news, I can no longer read the script on the T.V. screen and . . . the pictures are blurred. My diagnosis: my glaucoma is suddenly deteriorating and I am going blind!

After supper, on my way out of the dining room, I briefly share my concern about the sudden change in my eyesight with Nurse Margaret. She sees my anxiety when she comforts, "You won't suddenly go blind."

But I am convinced. At 88, anything can happen to a person. But who can fathom the resilience of the human mind? While the possibility of turning blind occupies one part of the brain and makes me feel sad and frightened, another part is already facing reality and working on a solution. "Well," I tell myself, "if I turn blind, I want to go the *Manor* long-term care next door, if there is a room available . . . and I will have to find a few people willing to read books to me." The faces of two lady friends already show up in my mind.

At 8:30 p.m. there is a knock at my door and Nurse Margaret enters. "Were you at the hairdresser today?" she asks with a mysterious smile on her face. After my "Yes, I was," her face lights up like a candle. "So was Mrs. B.," she says. "She also complains about trouble with *her* eyesight. I think you two are wearing each other's glasses!" Her suggestion hit me as if I was shaken awake from a deep sleep. Of course, what Nurse Margaret says makes perfect sense. Why did I never think of this possibility? Nurse Margaret kindly exchanged the glasses between the two apartments and Bingo! my eyesight has been restored. I am not turning blind after all, at least, not for a while. And I got my glasses repaired, thanks to Mrs. B. and Mr. L. ***Thank you both!*** For it now dawns on me that the glasses you discussed when I saw you both earlier in the lobby, were, in fact *my* glasses.

I now have another reason for concern: what happened to my mind? Why did I never notice that the glasses I wore did not have the familiar crooked frame? Can the human mind go *"blind"*?

Trudy Joldersma
Shalom Gardens Assisted Living
Grimsby, Ontario

Proposition *continued*

our yes must be yes and our no, no. And so, when it all comes down, I encourage our brothers in the U.S. and other countries to whole-heartedly pursue civic laws that uphold our God-given moral laws, always speaking in love and understanding the deep longing of their gay neighbours to honour their personal covenants in a marriage ceremony. But I do believe that, when the nation has spoken and set in firm place laws which do not align with those of divine revelation, that we act as a self-governing body that has the right to formulate its own internal guidelines.

In other words, when we find ourselves to be the church in captivity (if you allow the parallel to Israel's history), we must not abandon the ways of our parents and the God of our parents to suit the laws of our captors. Proposition 8 may be unconstitutional, but no judge can rule it unscriptural.

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News

Redeemer's outgoing President:

Dr. Justin Cooper talks with Angela Reitsma Bick *(CC)* about his time at Redeemer, how it feels to leave and what he plans to do next.

Justin and Jesse Cooper with a farewell gift from the university college.

CC: How many students were at Redeemer when you became President in 1994?

Cooper: Somewhere in the vicinity of 450. We've doubled since then, which is very gratifying.

CC: How did it feel to hand out the first degrees that said "Bachelor of Arts" rather than "Bachelor of Christian Studies"?

Cooper: It was a huge moment, one that capped so many years of work. I remember that Jane Hogeterp was the first person across the stage in May of 1999. I'll never forget the moment.

CC: Do you think anything was lost when "Christian" was dropped from those degrees?

Cooper: No, I don't think so. The same question arose when we legally changed "Redeemer Reformed Christian College" to "Redeemer University College." If you understand the symbolism of names, then you understand that if you are Reformed in substance, in the warp and woof, then you don't need it formally.

CC: In the last two years, Redeemer has received $2.9 million from the federal government, as well as $75,000 from Scotiabank. Are you concerned about accepting public funding?

Cooper: And, by the way, we also received another $2.6 million from the provincial government. I am not concerned because these monies do not come with strings attached. These are infrastructure grants, not operational.

The most important thing about this funding is its message: that Christian universities are good for our country and worthy of support.

CC: And that validation feels like it's been a long time coming?

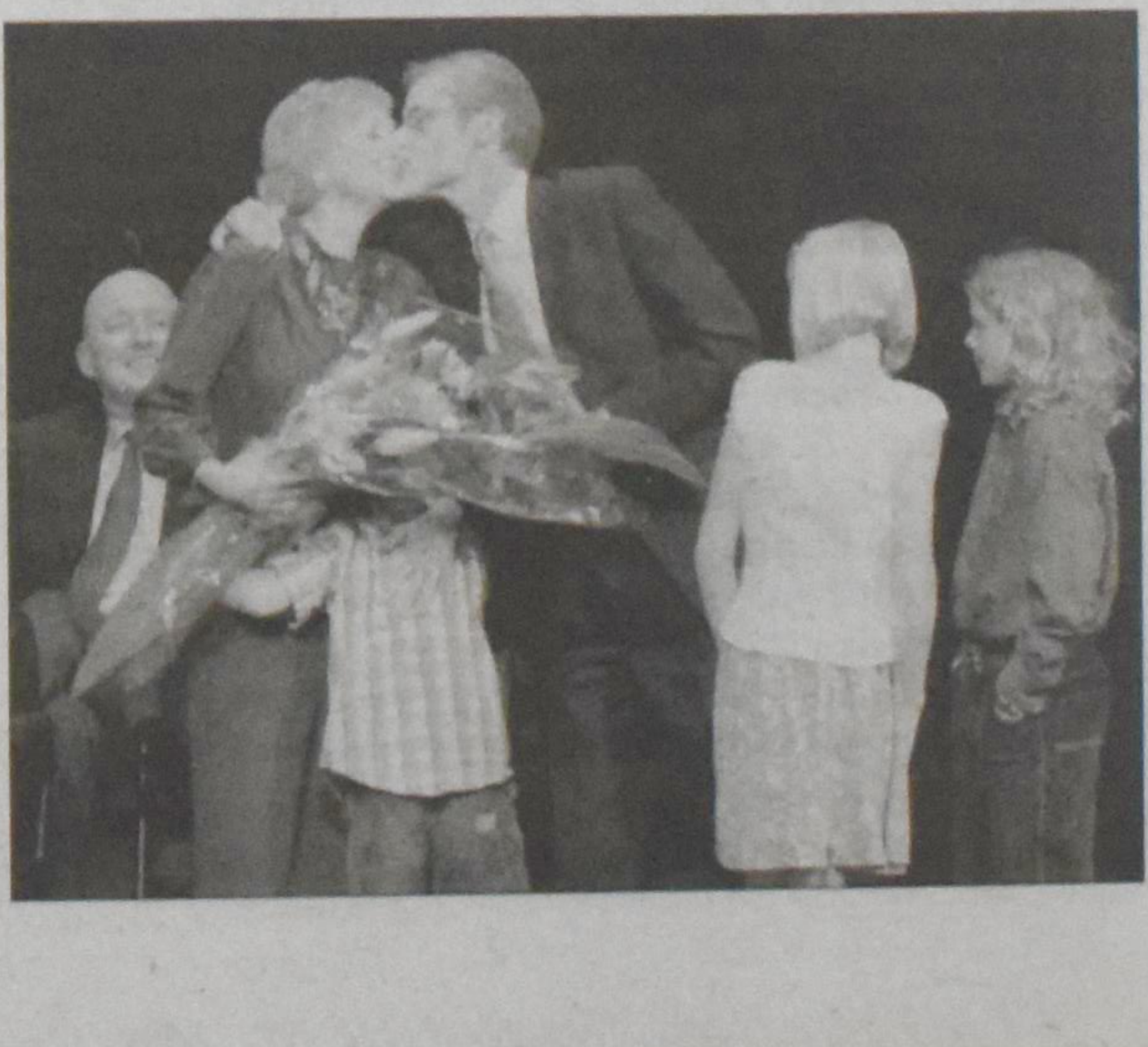
Cooper: Yes. It's something that Redeemer has always had to work for, given that we're in the province of Ontario where we've been treated with suspicion or ignorance or outright opposition. Adversity has taught us how to do things well, how to explain our mission in public language to a post-Christian society.

CC: You've been at Redeemer since 1980. Was it a challenge to balance the work with your family life?

Cooper: [My wife] Jesse and I are very thankful that the opportunity to be President coincided with becoming empty-nesters. I do not know how younger Presidents with younger families do it. It's an extremely demanding job, to the point when I was not really able to maintain an appropriate life/work balance. Jesse has borne the burden of the day, and I owe her a debt. I have an opportunity to right that imbalance now.

CC: Tell me about your grandchildren.

Cooper: We have eight grandchildren between five months and



Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

Tall tales

For my birthday my daughters and daughter-in-law combined their culinary talents to produce a delicious meal. Afterward we sat on Stephanie and Jessica's deck and watched Daniel chase bubbles until sunset.

Willene and Daniel left with James. Jack took off on his motorbike. A few minutes later I headed home alone in the Jeep. Tired but happy, I basked in the glow of a perfect day. I stopped at a variety store for a pack of gum. That's when things got interesting.

When I returned to the Jeep I turned the key, but it wouldn't start. I played with the gear shift to make sure it was in park, but still nothing. I popped open the hood and jiggled the battery wires. I tried the ignition again. More silence.

What to do? I called home and left a message for Jack. Then I called CAA. They promised a tow truck "within 45 minutes." I called the girls' house and Stephanie came to keep me company while I waited.

"I can drive you home, Mom." Stephanie said.

"I'll be fine," I said, "As long as the driver doesn't look too scary."

Forty-four and a half minutes later the tow truck pulled up. A burly young man with a friendly smile hopped out, battery cables in hand. A cigarette dangled from one side of his mouth. He tried several times to boost the Jeep, to no avail.

"Looks like I'll need it towed home," I said.

He raised his dark eyebrows and pushed his glasses into place. "I'll have to call it in."

When the Jeep was loaded I hugged Stephanie and whispered, "Memorize the license plate, ok?"

"Already done," she said with a smile.

I climbed into the cab and fastened my seatbelt. Stale tobacco smoke mingled with pine air freshener. The driver slammed his door shut and rammed the truck into gear. With a greasy fist he slammed the dashboard and the air conditioner groaned to life.

He grabbed his cell phone. "Gonna call my old lady and tell her to go to bed. I'm in for another long night. Nothing new. I've been working straight for nine days now, sixteen hours a day. It's worth it, though. I'm 28 years-old and I'm already worth seven digits." He looked for my reaction.

"Must be good money in driving."

"Oh yeah," he said. "I actually own my own trucking company, but I do this job for extra money. Plus I just got my papers today as a master pastry chef."

"Interesting career combination," I said, picturing the grimy hands fashioning creampuffs.

Out in the country he flicked on the high beams, flooding the roadway with light. "Wow," I said. "I guess no deer will take you by surprise."

"Not with these babies on," he said. "They cost $1200 apiece. Safety first."

The cell phone bleated. With the phone tucked between his ear and shoulder he downshifted for a stop sign. "No can do, bro. I'm on my way to Harriston. Won't be back until morning."

He hung up and looked at me. "My brother's drunk and needs a ride home."

"Ok," I said. "Just so you know, Harriston is only 45 minutes from where you picked me up."

"Good. Looks like I'll have enough fuel to get there and back. I was a little concerned when you said you needed a tow. But I still have a half tank."

"Well, if you run out of gas, I have CAA," I said. He thought for a minute, then laughed.

In the next half hour I learned he is the eldest of 24 children of a bigamist father, he started working at the age of four, and he speaks fluent Chinese. His extensive GIC portfolio earns 18 per cent interest and in fact, his investment banker specifically moved closer to help him manage his funds.

A few miles from home he said, "Yeah, my grandma is a big deal in the Catholic Women's League. But I don't really believe everything the Bible says."

Oh! I thought, *I should say something here. I believe everything the Bible says – not the Catholic Bible, of course. Does he know the difference?*

While my thoughts tumbled, he kept talking. "Yep. Biggest headache I ever got was when I stood at the bottom of the Eiffel Tower and looked straight up. Whoa. I won't ever do that again!"

"Oh my! Here we are," I said with some relief, even though my opportunity for evangelism had evaporated.

Later, before I fell asleep, I marveled at how readily the human heart embraces fantasy but rejects God's truth. And I prayed that my yarn-spinning friend might see the light someday. Who knows? Maybe God will yet use his gift-of-the-gab for a higher purpose. I hope so. (And I ain't lyin'!)

Heidi Vander Slikke (vanderslikke@everus.ca) *lives in Harriston, Ontario.*

Redeemer's incoming President:

Dr. Hubert Krygsman talks with Victoria Dykstra *(CC)*
about his family, his faith and his dreams for Redeemer's future.

CC. Please describe your background.

Dr. Krygsman: My parents immigrated to Canada in 1950 and settled in the Aylmer area where they acquired a farm and raised 13 children. I'm the middle child. All through our growing up years, we helped with farm work including hoeing, picking tomatoes for Campbells and cucumbers for Bicks, and growing strawberries. When we were old enough to go to high school, we got jobs off the farm. Each of us earned enough to pay our high school tuition and later university and post-graduate tuition as well.

As devout Reformed Christians, our parents raised us with the belief that God is central to our lives: hence church, Christian school, and family always came first. They believed that if you had your priorities right, God would provide. At London Christian High School my awareness that all is connected in Christ grew; [I realized] that faith makes a difference in our choices whether they be dating and marriage or economic policies.

I got my Bachelor of Arts degree at King's College in Alberta, my Masters at University of Calgary, and my Ph.D. at Carlton University in Ottawa. My wife Nancy and I have two sons and a daughter, two of whom are married. Two of our kids live in Grand Rapids and one in Idaho.

CC: In what way do you feel the Lord prepared you for this post?

Dr. Krygsman: Some of that is my background: I was raised in a devout family committed to serving the Lord, in the Christian Reformed Church and in Christian education. These shaped my outlook on life – that is, what we're called to live for and work for in the service of God. Also, being raised in a big family, having had to work hard and to negotiate with my siblings gave me some primitive preparation for leadership.

My graduate studies in Canadian history and the history of ideas and of religion gave me a sense of the cultural landscape that a Christian University has to function in. Also I have a strong understanding of reformed thinking, which allows me to give some leadership in developing Christian perspective on various disciplines.

During my teaching years [at Dordt] I continually increased my role in administration. I became heavily involved in creating and revising our core educational program with a focus on a Christian vision of curriculum and connecting it to other parts of students' lives. I was also involved with the faculty association, giving leadership to the faculty assembly, and helping to develop an academic senate that combined administrative and faculty leaders in forming a good college vision with a sense of how to do these things. I think God used my experience at Dordt to provide the groundwork for my role here at Redeemer.

Two years ago when we became empty nesters, we asked the Lord to take us where we could best serve. We felt the call to come here and the bonus is that now we can enjoy our extended families that live nearby.

CC: In four years you will see the first class graduating completely under your tenure at RUC. Describe the graduate student as you see him or her prepared to meet the future.

Dr. Krygsman: I want our students to develop a vibrant faith, skill, and a passion to serve. Clearly, developing a vibrant living faith in God and in Jesus Christ as Saviour of all creation and to live that faith with abandonment deeply in their hearts and guts is paramount. Further, to understand with depth and breadth the biblical story of redemption and that the claims of God's kingdom involve every part of who we are – that they live out of that understanding with wisdom. And that they develop critical insight and skills to

Hubert and Nancy Krygsman welcomed to Redeemer."

serve God's kingdom with passion in their primary vocation, ready to become leaders in their church and school and responsible citizens knowing what the issues are.

I'd like them to be alert to the larger world of which we are a part. We have a calling now to serve God's kingdom all around the world. Needs in the world are great – there's a hunger and desire for Christian transformation. Our students I hope will be gripped with the vision and passion to be advocates for justice – a healing salt for others and for the kingdom.

CC: If you could dream big with money being no obstacle, what would your vision for Redeemer include?

Dr. Krygsman: We could build curricular programs to include a Bachelor of Health Sciences, a Master of Education, and programs in international studies. Also programs related to digital media – to be at the leading edge of some of the most powerful media in our culture. And in the natural sciences, I'd love to see programs in engineering, bio-physics, and bio-chemistry.

Also I'd like to see resources for faculty and staff to grow, especially in student life – to develop a co-curricular side of university life where students are taught to develop leadership skills and relationship. This is part of the informal curriculum of a residential university. We've learned that there's a lot going on in students' lives outside the classroom in which they could use some development.

Also, the establishment of internships and co-op programs to get students connected to their community would help equip them to serve. Additionally, more financial aid would help us attract more students.

Sometime in the future, I'd also like to see the addition of a student union building, perhaps with space for the performing arts. We already provide a lot of services to the community with our athletic department and the upcoming indoor soccer dome, but we also need to focus on the arts, because they are important to help us dream those dreams and have those visions to think creatively and imaginatively about how God's kingdom can make a difference.

CC: How many boxes of books did you bring with you to your office here at RUC?

Dr. Krygsman: So far, no boxes. Because of the renovation going on here at Redeemer, my office is temporary and has no room. But I brought 125 boxes from Dordt – some of which will remain at home. I can't part with books – you can't part with a hand or a foot and in somewhat the same way I can't part with any of my books.

Vicky is a mother of five adult children, a wife, a grandmother, and a recently retired teacher who lives in Ancaster, Ontario

Cooper *continued*

10 years old. We are very blessed.

CC: Will the two part-time positions you're starting allow you more time with those grandkids?

Cooper: Yes. As Executive Director of Christian Higher Education Canada (CHEC), I will be working 15 hours a week, and the position of Executive Director of Reformed Institutions of Higher Education only requires twenty days a year. I promised Jesse and the grandkids they would have at least a third of my time.

CC: And you don't need to relocate for either job?

Cooper: No. As the son of a pastor, I had an itinerant life, and the last 28 years in Dundas have made Hamilton my home. My number one condition for [life after Redeemer] was to stay in my church, stay near my grandkids, stay in our home.

CC: Whenever your name comes up, the game of squash is often mentioned. Can you think of any correlations between being good at squash and running a university?

Cooper: You have to think fast, think on your feet, and have a lot of stamina.

CC: What will you miss most about Redeemer?

Cooper: The students, the energy of the campus, particularly the spiritual energy, and the academic stimulation. There will be a little bit of a hollow spot in September when I'm not there.

CC: What do you see as the future challenges for Redeemer?

Cooper: To remain hospitably Reformed. To maintain an academic edge and reputation. And to find the right size for its space: for Trinity Christian, that's about 1200 students, for Dordt it's about 1100, for Calvin it's settling in around 4000 . . . so Redeemer has to find its right size based on programs, quality and the supply of 17-year-olds.

CC: How many boxes of books has it taken to empty out the Presidential Office?

Cooper: I took eight boxes home; I gave a number of books to Political Science professors and donated the rest to the library. It would have been about thirty-five boxes.

Church News

CRWRC answers pleas re: flood-stricken Pakistan

BURLINGTON, Ontario (CRCNA) – The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is praising the decision by the Canadian government to match all private donations to registered Canadian charities in support of relief efforts in flood-ravaged Pakistan.

"We are very pleased with this announcement," said Wayne deJong, director of Disaster Response and Rehabilitation for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). "Canadians can now continue to give generously and know that their donations will have twice the impact."

CRWRC is the relief and development agency of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

The latest United Nations estimates suggest that the disaster has killed 2,000 people and affected more than one-fifth of Pakistan's total land area. Meanwhile, the widespread flooding threatens the health of millions of people, says the World Health Organization (WHO).

"WHO and . . . [its] partners are actively responding to multiple health threats, including water- and vector-borne diseases, the delivery of health care following the destruction of more than 200 hospitals and clinics, and the provision of emergency health materials, including medicines," says a WHO news release.

Pakistan is facing its worst disaster in more than 30 years, said UNICEF regional director for South Asia Daniel Toole.

"Thousands of villages and towns have been washed away," said Toole, after touring the submerged districts of Sindh province. "There is a dire need to rapidly upscale the relief efforts by the government of Sindh and aid agencies."

Canada will match funds

The scale of the disaster makes the Canadian announcement of matching funds especially important. "For every eligible donation by individual Canadians to Canadian-registered charities and earmarked for efforts to assist Pakistan relief efforts, Canada will contribute an equivalent amount to the Pakistan Floods Relief Fund," said Canadian House leader, John Baird.

The Canadian government will match eligible contributions by Canadians made between August 2 and September 12, with an equivalent contribution to the Pakistan Floods Relief Fund, with no set limit. CIDA (the Canadian International Development Agency) will be responsible for administering the Fund.

"As with Haiti, CRWRC will not directly receive the matching funds," added deJong, "but of course we are eligible to apply for the funds – and have in fact already done so with an application to CIDA International Humanitarian Assistance."

CRWRC has significant experience in Pakistan's northwestern provinces, having responded to previous disasters in 2005, 2008 and 2009. The agency's Pakistani partner, the Interfaith League Against Poverty (ILAP), is based in Islamabad.

CRWRC is encouraging all Christian Reformed Churches in Canada to schedule an offering for Pakistan on or before the September 12 deadline. Individuals are also strongly encouraged to make a donation.

In the United States, churches and individuals are also asked to give generously and pray for CRWRC as it responds to the needs of victims of the flooding. Donations may be made online or by telephone, even after the September 12 deadline.

CRWRC in Canada:
Burlington, Ontario
1-800-730-3490

CRWRC in the U.S.:
Grand Rapids, Michigan
1-800-55-CRWRC (27972) or
616-241-1691

UK: Church calls for BBC to appoint religion editor

LONDON (TCI) – The Church of England has called on the BBC to appoint a religion editor to bring more depth to the Corporation's "religious output."

Bishop of Manchester Rt. Rev. Nigel McCulloch, the C. of E.'s senior communications spokesperson, says that it makes little sense for areas such as the arts and science to have editors, but not religion.

And he supported a previous call, made by BBC Radio 4 presenter Roger Bolton, for the appointment of an editor, saying: "There has been at least one public call for the BBC to appoint a religion editor, to reflect the importance of religious literacy to any proper understanding of today's world."

McColloch added, "We echo that call, which would provide a recognized expert to bring greater co-ordination and depth to the corporation's religious output across all channels. We see no logical distinction between the genre of arts, science and business (all of which include reflecting and discerning between different opinions and perspectives, and have BBC editors) and that of religion (the landscape of which likewise demands a 'trusted guide' for both internal and external stakeholders)."

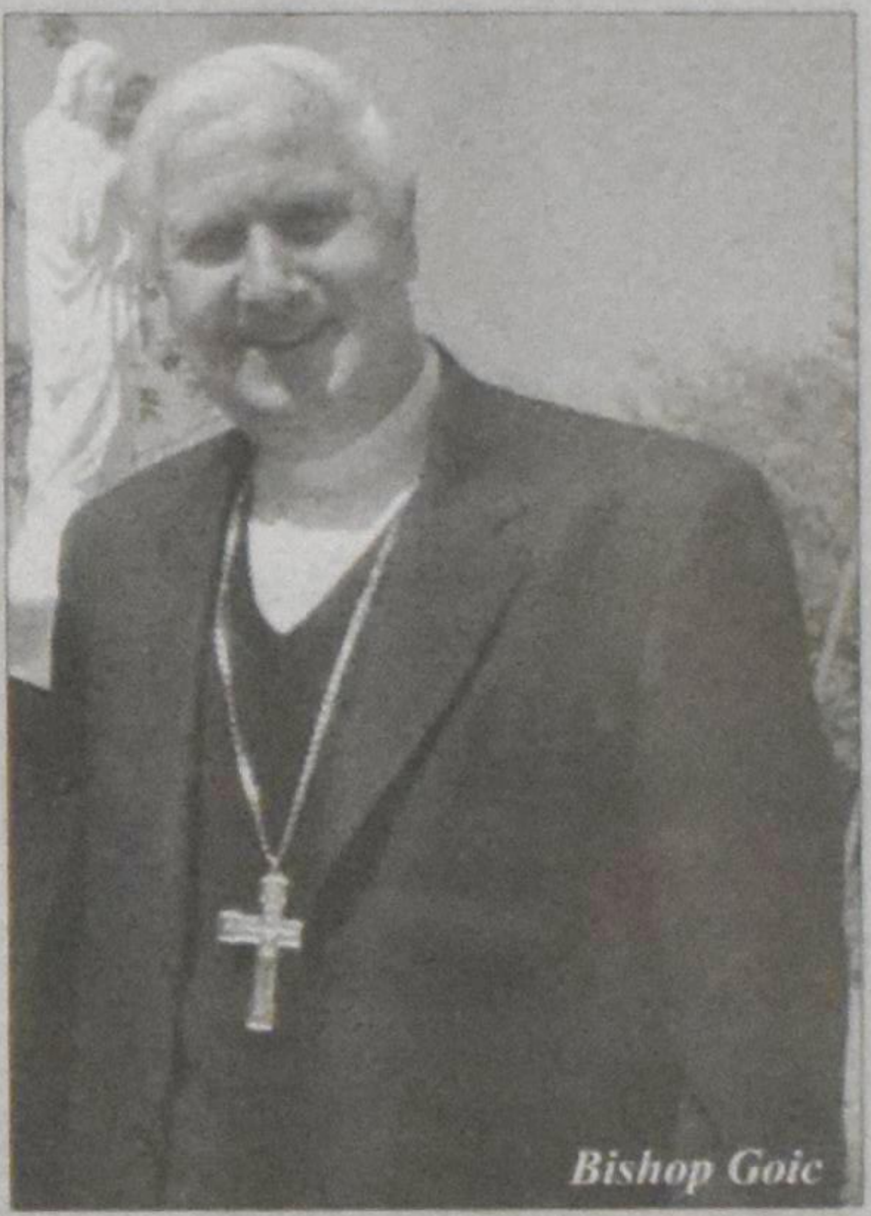
The church's call was made in a submission document in response to the BBC Trust's review of Radio 3, Radio 4 and Radio 7. (Radio 7 is to be rebranded as Radio 4 Extra.)

In May, commentator and radio host Roger Bolton had warned that BBC television was in the hands of "secular and sceptical" executives who ignore religion. Bosses at the corporation's TV channels "view religious coverage as a rather tiresome obligation to be minimized rather than a rich and promising area to explore," Bolton said. Bolton, who presents the "Feedback" program on Radio 4, said it was baffling that a religious perspective was so often absent in the BBC's news coverage. He then called on BBC News to appoint a religion editor of similar prominence to its business editor, Robert Peston.

In January, popular BBC presenter Simon Mayo said religion is "increasingly driven to the margin" on the BBC. Mayo, who is known as a Christian, also said there is an anti-Christian theme apparent in television comedians.

Chilean bishop urges 'educated laity' to remain present in 'secular sphere'

SANTIAGO, Chile (CNA) – The president of the Chilean Bishops' Conference, Bishop Alejandro Goic, has called on the church members he oversees to "remain engaged in the dialogue between faith and culture."



Bishop Goic

"It is urgent that we have specialized organizations in the diocese run by well-formed laypeople in order to generate dialogue between the faith and the culture and to defend the human dignity of men and women," said Bishop Goic during a conference on Chile's bicentennial.

The bishop went on to say that believers exercise the greatest influence in the media not through programs of religious content but "by achieving a natural presence and underscoring Gospel values creatively and skillfully as Christian journalists. "

Bishop Goic noted that Catholics have an enormous presence in volunteer work for the poor and needy, but that their presence in unions is minimal. "Believers who are gifted organizers should be on the forefront of issues related to jobs and the dignity of workers," he said.

He also stressed the importance of educating young people in civics, since "social justice, national and international peace and the promulgation of laws respectful of human dignity depend in large measure on politics. It is here where the Christian is called to be a witness to Christ in politics."

Mexico: Evangelicals support Catholic defense of life, family

MEXICO CITY, Mexico (CNA) – In a letter sent to the Archdiocese of Mexico City, evangelical leaders of the World Network of Family Ministries offered their unconditional support for the defense of life and the family founded upon marriage between one man and one woman.

"Since the year 2000, evangelical churches began to be aware that we should defend life from conception to natural death and that we are obliged to protect the family based on marriage between man and woman," the letter addressed to Father Hugo Valdemar and the Archdiocese of Mexico City stated.

"Now," it continued, "in the Federal District we have both the legalization of abortion and gay marriage, in addition to homosexual adoption. This makes us more conscious that we must continue in the battle against this culture of death."

After noting that they were involved in the debates at the Mexico City Legislative Assembly, the evangelicals said, "We also fought the battle at the Supreme Court, where we met with almost all of the justices to express our point of view in support of life. All of this helped to open the public debate."

For these reasons, they explained, "We express our solidarity and support for the bishops of the Catholic Church, who have manifested their rejection of abortion and gay marriage."

"We must not allow the Federal District mayor [Marcelo Ebrard] to continue placing limits on the clergy and all Christians for expressing their points of view regarding issues of life and the family. These intolerant attitudes of the governor are only seen in authoritarian governments," the leaders said.

The statement concluded, "There is no question that in issues related to life and the family the Catholic Church and evangelicals agree, and this should make us more united."

CRC's Faith Alive offers new study of Jonah, Esther

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan (CRCNA) – The Old Testament books of Jonah and Esther are the first ones to be included in a new Bible study series published by Faith Alive Christian Resources, the publishing agency of the Christian Reformed Church.

Called *Infuse*, the new line of Bible studies complements Faith Alive's "Discover Your Bible Series." That series has been used for many years, particularly in Coffee Break, a widely popular, outreach-oriented, small-group Bible study for women. Coffee Break will be 40 years old this month.

"Those who participate in Coffee Break are our anchor audience," says Sam Huizenga, small group ministry co-ordinator for Christian Reformed Home Missions. "At their request, we've put extra material in the books in the new series. But the goal hasn't changed. It is still about what the Bible says to you, and how you can discover that together."

Making use of graphics, photos and information boxes, *Infuse* has also been created with younger people in mind. Emphasis is placed on the lessons learned through God's work in the drama, twists and turns of human life, and of human interaction with God and God's interaction with us.

The series allows for personal exploration even while it provides historical and biblical background to the texts being studied. For instance in "Jonah: Fish, Flaws and Forgiveness," the text provides a detailed description of the ancient city of Nineveh to which God sent Jonah to preach repentance. It also offers follow-up study ideas and material that can be used outside of the Bible study session for personal reading and devotions.

In "Esther: Courage in a Complicated World," there is a map of the Persia of Esther's day, background on the ancient Persian civilization, biographical information on Esther and an explanation of why her story inspired the Jewish holy day, Purim. Purim is still celebrated today in many Jewish households.

How does it apply to *me*?

"We have tried to include an emphasis in this series on 'What does the text mean to me? How does it apply to my life today?'" explains Paul Faber, a Faith Alive editor for the series. "We want *Infuse* to help people discover where faith and life meet."

Like Coffee Break's "Discover Your Bible Series," *Infuse* has in mind an audience made up of both people familiar with Bible studies and people who aren't. Its method is inductive, meaning the reader discovers what the Bible has to say by asking questions and seeking answers from the passages studied.

"You can come to this series at any experience level," says Faber. "This is not written or presented in an in-depth, academic style.... We want to encourage making room in the group for the Holy Spirit to work."

The next *Infuse* Bible study, due out later this month, will be on the gospel of Matthew. Following that will be studies on Colossians, Acts and the Psalms.

While the *Infuse* Bible study leader is important, that person is asked to serve more as a guide than a traditional teacher. Notes and tips for leading *Infuse* lessons are downloadable free from the Faith Alive website (<www.faithaliveresources.org>).

"We want to help provide a method of group learning that is trustworthy and true," says Sam Huizenga. "We want to help people to still study the Bible, getting into the text itself as they grow to know God better together."

Trapped miners set up make-shift chapel while praying for rescue

SANTIAGO, Chile (CNA) – The 33 miners trapped in the San Jose Mine in Atacama, Chile, requested that statues and religious pictures be sent down to them as they wait to be rescued, CNN reported.

Chilean officials say the rescue could take months but that they hope to reach the miners by Christmas. The copper mine collapsed on August 5, and the 33 miners have been trapped in a space nearly half a mile underground ever since.

A small passageway was put in place so that messages and supplies can be sent to the trapped miners.

Although a crucifix has already been sent down, the miners, virtually all of whom are Roman Catholics, have also requested more statues of Mary and the saints to construct a make-shift chapel. "The miners want to set up a section of the chamber they are in as a shrine," Chilean's Minister of Health, Jaime Manalich told CNN.

In late August President Sebastian Pinera spoke with the miners by phone and then placed a statue of St. Lorenzo, the patron of miners, in the presidential palace along with 32 Chilean flags and one Bolivian flag to represent each of the miners trapped since August 5.

Supplies and icons reach miners through these shafts.

Hindu Christian convert murdered in Orissa

KANDHAMAL, Orissa, India (AsiaNews) – The body of Biskesan Pradhan was found by police in late August in the Orissa (Kandhamal) district. The area was hit hard by the anti-Christian pogrom of 2008. A former Hindu extremist, the man had converted to Christianity three years ago.

Police found the man's body beside a stream in the forest and have launched an investigation. Biskesan Pradhan, 47, had been a leader of the Hindu extremist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) but had converted to Christianity three years ago, becoming a member of the Baptist Church. His murder coincided with the publication of the results of the National People's Tribunal (NTP), an initiative in New Delhi held from August 22 to 24. The tribunal was attended by victims, activists and judges with the purpose of reporting cases of violence of the pogroms of 2008. The murders and other crimes carried out under those pogroms have so far gone unpunished.

Sajan George, president of Global Christian Council of Indian Christians (Gcic) says: "The news of the brutal murder of Biskesan Pradhan is deeply distressing. We condemn this act made against the former extremist Hindu who became a Christian. "

Citing the results of the NTP, Sajan George points out that the jury reported a succession of forced conversions carried out by Hindu extremists in Orissa, even after the events of 2008. "The fanatics use torture, intimidation, murder, economic boycotts and public humiliation to convert or re-convert the population."

George says the violence that began August 23, 2008, broke the climate of peace and harmony previously present in Orissa. He calls on the central government, local authorities and civil society to engage with all Christians to stop these criminal acts and to continue to protect religious minorities.

Somalia:
Islamic insurgents expel World Vision, other Christian aid groups

NAIROBI (Ekklesia) – Al-Shabaab, an Islamic insurgent group that controls most of southern and central Somalia, has expelled three Christian aid groups from the southern part of the nation.

"Acting as missionaries under the guise of humanitarian work, the organizations have been spreading their corrupted ideologies in order to taint the pure creed of the Muslims in Somalia," Al-Shabaab asserted in a public statement.

Criticizing Al-Shabaab's "intolerant approach," Roman Catholic Bishop Giorgio Bertin of Djibouti and apostolic administrator of Mogadishu, said, "Of course [the agencies] were inspired by their faith," adding, "since they were giving a good service according to international humanitarian criteria, they are not to be impeded in their charitable work."

Pastor Ahmed Abukar Mukhtar, leader-in-exile of a small Christian community in Somalia, also condemned the halting of the relief organizations' work by Al Shabaab. "Now that they have suspended their work, it is the local people who will suffer," he told ENInews.

Abukar, who fled Somalia for Kenya, criticized Al Shabaab, which controls most of southern Somalia, for claiming that the agencies engaged in attempting to convert Muslims, who account for almost all of Somalia's people.

"The allegations are not true. They have used this excuse to expel the agencies," said Abukar.

On August 8, Harakat Al Shabaab Al-Mujahideen (Movement of Warrior Youth) demanded that World Vision, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and Diakonia, a Swedish agency, immediately cease operations in Somalia.

No 'proselytizing'

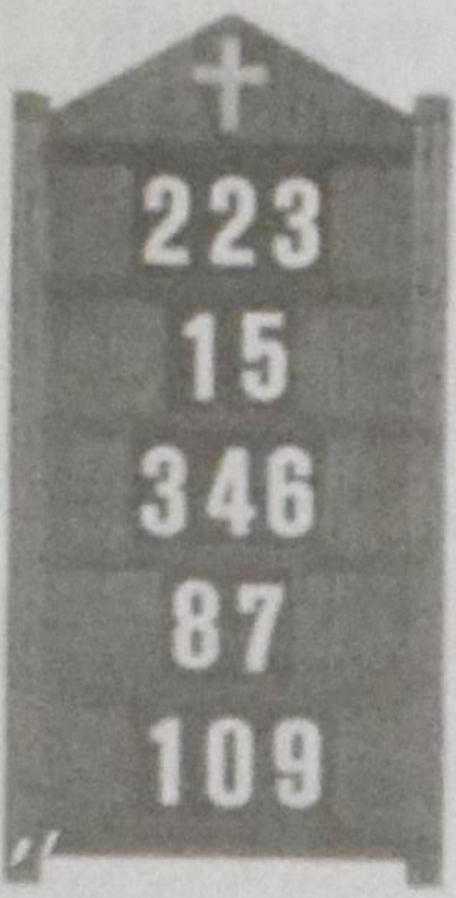
In an August 9 statement, World Vision said keys to its offices and assets were taken from staff by Al Shabaab. It said that its operations in affected areas of Somalia have been temporarily suspended while it plans its next steps. "World Vision is surprised and disappointed by the move, which is apparently based on false accusations of spreading Christianity," the agency said.

It quoted its Somalia program director, Chris Smoot, as saying that while World Vision is a Christian organization, "we have specific policies that prohibit proselytizing and we are a signatory to the Red Cross code of conduct that guarantees impartiality in our distribution of aid."

ADRA, which has worked in Somalia since 1992, said closing operations in south-central Somalia, where it has been rehabilitating wells, working to provide livelihoods and increasing access to education, would adversely affect 180,000 people. ADRA noted that it is a signatory to the code of conduct that bans proselytizing.

Diakonia, a Swedish Christian development agency that has been working in Somalia since 1994, said, "Our efforts are aimed at people harmed by poverty, oppression and violence in various forms, regardless of their faith, skin colour or gender. A diversity of religious convictions and non-religious organizations is represented in our network."

Music



Congregational singing: a revolution in worship

Curt Gesch

Although we often think about "justification by faith" as Luther's big contribution to the Reformation and "the sovereignty of God" as Calvin's contribution, I think that the Reformers' emphasis on congregational singing may be more significant. The Anabaptists (today's Mennonites representative) are known for espousing "believer's baptism," but they, too, put great emphasis on congregational singing. We see this in Canada by looking at the Trinity Western choirs, the Winnipeg choirs, prominent Canadian musicians (Ben Heppner), broadcasters (Eric Friesen) and so on.

Before the Reformation most music in churches was performed by "special people" – choirs of monks or laypeople – and professional instrumentalists, especially organists. When the Reformers "gave worship back to the people," they simply let the people sing.

With a population that was only partially literate (certainly not musically literate) this meant that congregations had to learn the new tunes that the Reformers were commissioning from composers. Sometimes a music leader (in Dutch called a *voorzanger*) would teach songs by singing one line and then the congregation repeating it. This song leader would never be allowed – in Calvinistic tradition – to be a performer. John Calvin himself would not allow musical instruments to be used in worship because he thought that the unadorned human voice was the most fitting instrument of praise, and that singing in unison reflected the unison of the church. He also restricted singing to psalms and a few – a very few – Bible songs, like the ten commandments.

In Lutheran churches, choirs played a larger role. The new hymns and psalms were set to four-part harmony and accompanied by organs most often. Soon a musically-literate Lutheran church developed. One of my friends said that listening to a Lutheran congregation sing is like listening to a choir because of the four-part harmony.

Historical singing

Both Calvinistic and Lutheran traditions changed through time, of course. By the time of Bach, Lutheran cantatas were so impressive musically and theologically that preachers complained that people came for the cantata, not the other elements of worship.

Calvin's followers changed more slowly. The Presbyterians stuck with the psalms for hundreds of years, changing only very slowly by adding time-tested, theologically-tested hymns to their Psalters. (Of course this is a generalization. Several Presbyterian churches still sing Psalms exclusively.) A big change in accompaniment did take place over the years, however. The role of the organist became more and more important.

It seems that something like this happened: When Protestants in The Netherlands took over Roman Catholic cathedrals they "inherited" big organs in many cases. These were not to be used in worship, according to their tradition, but they were wonderful instruments. So they used the church buildings as recital halls, with regular Sunday afternoon concerts. Sometimes these concerts "stretched" until the afternoon/evening worship was to begin, and ergó the prelude was born. It didn't take long for organ accompaniment in the service to become common. However, in most Reformed churches, the psalms retained a central place in worship, as did unison singing. Choirs and soloists were virtually unheard of in worship settings, as "the glory of God" was seen as the primary purpose of worship and congregational singing one of the main ways of achieving this. Performance was seen as man-centred. Strangely enough, organ improvisation, fugues, themes and variations on psalm tunes, and other fancy accompaniments, often approached performance. So did the person, rhetorical, and oratorical abilities of the preacher, the dominee.

Recent changes and innovations

I think that it is fair to say that those of us who have observed Reformed church worship have seen changes, too. We sing a capella for special verses only (or if there is no accompanist, in small churches like Telkwa). We've had our debates – and they are largely completed – about using instruments in worship. For some of us it was not a question of using an organ, but of using guitars, drums and so on. Mostly, we've accepted these changes gracefully.

We use different techniques than the early reformers did, but we do recognize the need for helping the congregation learn new songs: we have a "praise group" or an individual stand in front and sing a verse through and then help the congregation with subsequent verses by singing clearly and rhythmically. We use overhead projectors or the Power Point-type projector to put words on the wall. (Unfortunately, we haven't figured out a good way to get the notes on the wall, which means that the musical training most have received in elementary and high school is somewhat "unemployed.")

In certain cases, we use amplified recordings. These new methods are really not all that different from the voorzanger of old.

What is different, however, is that in our age, the medium is often the message. For many of us, church music means guitar music, or synthesizer music, a trap set for drums, an electric base, and – very important – a musical "group" in front of the sanctuary singing with amplification.

We live in a media-saturated world. We don't dance, but we watch *So You Think You Can Dance* on TV. Instead of singing while doing our housework, we listen to Christian radio or CDs. Many of us watch hockey rather than play it. So, when it comes to music in the church, we want to sit and watch and listen, singing and clapping when we are moved. The songs that move us are not exclusively, but often, songs that have been made famous by Christian musicians via the mass media or concerts rather than songs from a Psalter or hymnal. It is quite an eye-opener to see people's body language when they discover which song is to be sung next. Some people look resignedly at a hymn or a psalm; some barely move their lips when a contemporary Christian worship song is projected onto the wall. I suspect we all need to examine our motives (see sidebarm).

Johann Sebastian Bach is said to have inscribed on all his music, whether church music or dance music, this phrase: *Soli Deo Gloria* – "only to the glory of God." Bach certainly wasn't perfect, in fact he seems to have enjoyed demonstrating his musical prowess, but his goal is admirable. How can we do the same when we worship God in places such as Telkwa CRC?

***** See related item on page 16***

Curt Gesch attends Telkwa Christian Reformed Church and is a columnist for Christian Courier.

Questions going forward

Curt Gesch

Is congregational singing an option for you and your children or a necessity for spiritual worship?

Are we properly thankful for the marvellous technology that we have (right here in our Telkwa CRC church building) that enables us to see song lyrics, short video clips, responsive readings, etc., and to participate together?

Are we using the technology we have to reinforce the Reformers' attempt to "give worship back to the people?"

Does keeping the piano in the back help you to avoid thinking about the instrument and the accompanist the way we hope it does?

Would you sing along with a singing group if they sang from the back of the church?

Should we have a church choir to teach us new songs?

If I'm leading a song from the front, should I sit down (or move to a pew) after the congregation "gets the hang of it?"

Do organs, pianos, other instruments, sound equipment, wall screens, etc., carry more symbolic weight in our eyes than the pulpit, font and table?

What can we say to our community members who join in congregational worship rarely if at all?

What can we do to reinforce the necessity of congregational singing to our children and grandchildren?

Music

ISOBELLE GUNN artist profile

Brett Alan Dewing

Isobelle Gunn is the internationally-acclaimed acoustic vocal trio comprised of Leanna Zeyl, her brother, Jeremy Zeyl and his wife, Lara Schat-Zeyl. The musical collaboration of this sister-brother/husband-wife initiative relies on blended voices and lyrics which evoke comparisons to artists such as Sufjan Stevens, Sarah Harmer, Emmylou Harris and Iron and Wine. Isobelle Gunn began singing together in the spring of 2006 and released their debut, self-titled EP in April 2007, quickly achieving critical acclaim with the song "Emily", which received an Honourable Mention in the ISC International Songwriting Competition (2007), in addition to other awards. The band takes their name from a historic Scottish-Canadian woman who immigrated to Canada at the turn of the 18th century and disguised herself as a man in order to work in a man's world. The sound of the name Isobelle Gunn contrasts the beautiful and poetic with the painful and harsh. This juxtaposition reflects the group's vision; they believe music can transform as well as entertain, and seek to explore truth in the world – the beautiful and the ugly and all that lies in between – through the lenses of hope and redemption.

Isobelle Gunn has performed at a wide variety of venues ranging from music halls and pubs to barns and outdoor festivals and including coffeehouses, school assemblies as well as one of their personal favourite venues, house concerts. The past year has taken Isobelle Gunn to both sides of Canada's coast. A late summer 2009 tour of British Columbia culminated in a performance at the Canadian Country Music Awards (Gospel Music Showcase) and an April 2010 tour of Newfoundland coincided with the Juno Awards. They are often hired to help groups ranging from Christian Schools to public advocacy groups to Church Ministry causes with their fundraising efforts. Most recently, the group has felt called to participate in worship services through providing special sacred music as well as worship leading. Whatever the reason or wherever the location, audiences everywhere have been delighted by Isobelle Gunn's "sweet tight harmony" and "meaningful lyrics" as they are taken on an emotional and spiritual journey through the group's live show.

CC recently interviewed Lara about being a Reformed band.

How has your "Reformed identity" shaped your music?

One of the most meaningful things about being Reformed is the idea that there is an inherent good purpose for everything in the world, that God has built an original structure and order in his Creation. This provides a context within which we do our work. We know that we are not creating ex nihilo but are able to "find" these sounds and melodies and harmonies because God is the God of music and has gifted us and enabled us to find them. We realize that in capturing sounds and creating melodies we are reflecting the image of our Creator, albeit very imperfectly. The reality that we can only "create" because our God creates provides a foundation upon which we can build and risk and fail and achieve and try and try again.

In terms of our lyrics, the Reformed tenet that God is the Author and Redeemer of all within his world liberates us to explore all manner of Truth in the world. There is no subject, so to speak, that we have to shy away from, that is too dark to face or too joyful to acknowledge. The reality of God's Kingdom being built on earth, of his Spirit using His people to build that Kingdom, and our sense that we can and must play a role in this, keeps us from giving into either cynicism or a fear-based superficiality.

How has the Redeemer University College experience changed the way you approach your art?

For myself, my Redeemer experience was "liberating" with respect to my art. I will never forget studying Madonna with Dr. Bert Polman in Music Appreciation class. I loved the idea of embracing and celebrating art and artists who were not necessarily Christian, the idea of common Grace and learning from ideas and truth conveyed through people who didn't acknowledge God as their Saviour – and yet still understanding these things as flowing out of God's image in these people and ultimately, as blessings.

While I had been raised in a Christian home and gone to a Christian elementary and high school – all of which I know were "Reformed" at their core – at Redeemer the comprehensive Reformed world and life view was articulated in a much more comprehensive and deliberate manner. This, in turn, provided me with an intentionality in my own

thinking and living and being. I found it so energizing, so meaningful. This worldview, then, being both so holistic and so practical, could not help but impact my art. Things didn't have to say the words "praise Jesus" in order to do so. The choices I make, the reasons for my choices, the spirit behind these reasons, these things can all honour God and praise Jesus, or not, every moment of every day.

What is different about being a Reformed artist?

I think being a Reformed artist brings along with it a courage and a confidence with respect to what is acceptable to sing about. Because of our belief that all truth is God's Truth and that God is the Creator and Redeemer of all things, that "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who dwell in it," we cover a wide variety of characters, themes, images, narratives and emotions in our songs. We foray into some pretty dark, tough places. We're not scared or ashamed of doing this, though, because we do this within the context of hope and redemption, even though this doesn't necessarily mean that each song ends with a nice, clean, pretty bow on it.

Many listeners – both Christians and those who claim they do not believe in God – have told us that they appreciate our authenticity, that they can sense that there is a "spirit"

Isobelle Gunn is (l-r) Leanna Zeyl, Jeremy Zeyl and Lara Schat-Zeyl

about us and our music that is healing. Our song, Sara, in particular, which gives voice to a girl who has been sexually abused, evokes responses whether we sing it in a bar or during a house concert or at a church. I would say that someone comes up to one of us after nearly performance and thanks us for giving a voice to the often voiceless, for having the courage to not shy away from the truth of the destructive presence of abuse in the world, in the church, in our homes. One listener even reported later that hearing us sing that song gave her the confidence she needed to admit her own experience with abuse and to start the process of healing. When we hear things like that, we are humbled beyond words. It is an indescribable honour that God can use us for his purposes of peace and reconciliation in the world, and we are reminded again and again that God can only use us when we stay on our knees. Anytime we forget that and start forging ahead on our own strength, we are gently knocked back down to our knees. While that's an at times painful journey, we wouldn't have it any other way. We couldn't!

On the other hand, we also sing about the "everlasting peace" that comes from knowing Christ, that inexplicable peace that can only result from a submission to the God of the Universe and a communion with our Heavenly Father. Again, even listeners who are self-proclaimed (and vehemently) "not religious" have come up to us and told us there is "something about 'that' song" that stirs them, even if they don't have the language to explain why. To sing about peace in the midst of a world that is so often not peaceful on so many levels could seem irresponsible, frivolous, untrue, even, if we didn't have the context that we have, that we are not our own, that we belong to our Savior and that he is at work in our hearts and in his world. Sin is a reality with which we must contend, in our own hearts and in our relationships and in the wider context of world events. It is easy to give in to fear and anger and cynicism, and so we fight that constantly and also believe that being able to sing about joy and love and hope and peace is as an important part of Truth as the pain and hatred and fear and abuse and any matter of brokenness.

To live in the tension of the "here – but not yet"-ness of Kingdom living is, I guess, what we are about in a nutshell. And we constantly pray that God uses us as he wishes, trying to walk that line between putting in the work we need to do and following his voice. We know we are blessed to be doing what we love to do with people we love so much. It's an exhausting, frightening, confusing, exhilarating, liberating, surprising, humbling and most meaningful journey… plus it's just plain FUN!

All inquiries can be directed to the group by e-mailing jaspermusic@hotmail.com or calling Lara at 519-204-1891.

Discussion

Thoughts about Islam and Christianity – Part I

For the next six months, in the first issue of each month, CC *will carry a discussion of how Christianity and Islam relate to each other. Two scholars wrote their answers to each question independently of each other. There may be overlap, there maybe differences of opinion, we don't know. We hope our readers will benefit from this discussion. We also encourage readers to join the discussion via letters to the editor or comments on our website. The series will also be published on our website. Click on* Feature Articles.
Our paticipants: ***John H. Boer*** *is a former Nigeria missionary and author of some 20 books, including the 8-vol., 2700pp.* Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations. *See his www.Social-Theology.com. He lives in Vancouver, B.C.* ***Bert den Boggende*** *is a retired teacher with a PhD in history. He lives in Brooks, Alberta.*

Question 1: **What are the most striking similarities and differences between the religion of Islam and the Christian religion?**

No original sin, no saviour

John H. Boer

You can divide differences between Islam and Christianity in various ways. My favourite way is distinguishing between the core differences that will always remain and the cultural differences that have developed over time and could theoretically either change or be overcome. These changes could take place within either Christianity or Islam or within both.

The core difference between the two religions centres on a complex set of ideas about God, humanity, sin and salvation. Muslims fulminate against the notion of the Trinity and emphasize the unity of God exclusively. The thought of God having a son is the ultimate blasphemy to them. However, Jesus *is* a revered prophet, second only to Muhammad. They reject the notion of original sin – as do some major Christian traditions. They also reject the need for a mediating saviour. God just forgives – if he pleases. God has not bound himself to any promises and is free to decide everyone's ultimate destiny. He will weigh everybody's deeds but remains free to reject or accept each individual. Though there is no ground for assurance of salvation, Muslims do not seem to live in constant fear of hell. They emphasize that, though God is absolutely free, he is also the Merciful and Compassionate. These differences have been there from the beginning and will never disappear. This is where the basic antithesis resides.

Hypocritical attitude

The Muslim attitude to sin is, in my estimation, superficial and often results in hypocrisy. I believe this helps explain why they seldom admit to wrongs. While they castigate the West for imperialism and intolerance, they seldom if ever recognize their own imperialism and intolerance and are not prone to apologize. They complain about intolerance in the West, while their (ancestral) home countries are shot through with it. They accuse the West of racism, while racism is rife on their ancestral turf. They persecute Christians in their countries of origin and destroy churches, but demand freedom of religion for themselves in the West. Admittedly, they have no monopoly on hypocrisy; it just comes in different shapes and forms for different people. While the core difference here is permanent, it could potentially change due to internal shifts or to the influence of Western tolerance.

Then there is the issue of church and state. While almost all Christian traditions support the separation of church and state – not to be confused with the separation of *religion* from politics and state – Muslims tend to insist on the unity of state and mosque. They see the state as the handmaiden of Islam that supports the latter's institutions, pillars and mission, and that view includes financial support. This view of religion and state is a major reason for violence in Nigeria, for example.

Secularism rejected

As to historically conditioned differences, Muslims themselves often point to Western *secularism* as the most crucial difference. For today's Western Christian, secularism is almost our "native air" with which we have grown up and to which we have become accustomed. It has deeply penetrated our hearts and minds. Secularism confronted Muslims in the context of oppressive colonialism. Hence, to Muslims it has always been a hostile and ungodly worldview. Although there are secular Muslims, most Muslims have resisted the influence of secularism much more than have Christians. Many have contempt for adherents of secularism, especially for its Christian adherents. They hold secularism responsible for Western moral decadence and tend to be angry at Western attempts to impose this corrupt system on them in the context of imperialism and globalism. I do not consider this a core difference, for at its core Christianity is also anti-secular, even though most Christians have been unduly influenced by it.

Over against secularism, Islam is a *wholistic, comprehensive* religion that covers all of life, *theoretically* much like the Reformed Christian tradition. They are not shy about praying in public or dressing differently and are not averse to making public demands on issues that whimpy Western Christians have long surrendered to secularism or shoved with embarrassment into a hidden "religious" corner of life. Islam is a political religion that insists on using the organs of state, United Nations, corporations and all other structures, even its oil money, for its advance. Politics, economics, education – all of life is of one piece, and all of it is to be harnessed to the global Islamic mission. In reaction to Western secularism, Muslims have in recent decades revived and strengthened their wholism, while most Christians have, at least partially, cashed in theirs for a semi-secularism. Christians can learn some powerful lessons from Muslims with respect to politics, culture and personal lifestyles, including decreasing modesty in our dress codes.

A religion without grace

In the name of God, most gracious, most merciful.
Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe;
Most gracious, most merciful;
Master of the day of judgment.
You alone we worship; and You alone we ask for help.
Guide us in the right path;
the path of those whom You blessed; not of those who deserve wrath, nor the strayers.

(Authorized English Version)

Bert den Boggende

This opening sura of the Quran, the Muslim "Lord's Prayer," is one example expressing sentiments with which Christians generally can agree. Indeed, the Quran contains quite a few references to, among others, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Mary, Jesus, creation, angels and last judgment, albeit these references differ from those in Scripture.

In order to grasp the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity it is necessary to start with the Quran (meaning recitation), which for Muslims is God's final revelation. Its definitive text, at least for Sunnis, came in the eighth century; Shiites contested this text since there were important omissions concerning Muhammad's son-in-law Ali, a key figure for Shiites, while others complained that material not coming from Muhammad was inserted. Of divine origin, eternal, free from all faults and authoritative, its implications have been hotly debated. Early in Islam's history arose the notion that the Quran should be taken literally, a doctrine that became a key to orthodoxy. The Quran asks the believer to submit to the will of Allah, a notion deserving closer scrutiny.

Additions to the Quran

Using mainly general principles, the Quran tells believers what Allah wishes them to do. Reflecting upon these principles, the early community came up with the so-called Pillars of Islam, the framework of spiritual life. These pillars (not followed by the Afro-American Nation of Islam) consist of the declaration of faith, "there is no god but God, and Muhammad is his Prophet;" five daily ritual prayers; fasting during Ramadan; *zakat*, a percentage of one's net income given as charity to poor Muslims; and pilgrimage. However, some Muslims regard the profession of faith so foundational to the other four that they replace it with (or add to another pillar) holy war, also called *jihad*.

With its expansion Islam encountered issues not covered in the Quran. Muslims started to collect oral memories of how Muhammad was supposed to have behaved, *Sunna*, and recorded them in traditions, the *Hadith*, of which there are six collections. In addition there was the accumulated wisdom of the community, the *Sunna* of the community. Sunna scholars suggested that if the Quran provided no clear answer, people should consult the *Hadith*, which some equated with the Quran. Even if a *Hadith* is not historically true in itself, it still may transmit *Sunna*! If these two still didn't give an answer, Muslims should resort to the *ijma*, the traditions and consensus of past Muslim communities. Finally, they should avail themselves of *qiyas*, analogical reasoning, arguing logically from what is known. Shiites have their own traditions.

Christians who desire to understand Islam absolutely need to know much more than the Quran.

Further differences

Although it is a rather legalistic approach, *sharia*, intended to help Muslims submit themselves to the will of Allah, regulates many aspects of daily life, ranging from food, dress and etiquette to the slaughter and preparation of animals for food. This regulated way of life, nearly from cradle to grave, is a way paved with good works earning entrance to Paradise. The negative connotations which Christians frequently attribute to *sharia* are obviously absent among Muslims. While this approach is strong on ethics, the concept of grace plays nearly no role in Islam.

Let me briefly mention three other issues. Even before the world was created, Allah made a covenant with human beings who promised to serve him. Significantly, God "created man to try him with affliction" and he "misleads whom he will." In a reworked story of the fall, Adam broke the contract and his fall is understood as an error in judgment, a mischief, not as a sin, never mind as original sin. His fall, therefore, did not taint the human race, and Jesus' atonement is unnecessary. It is up to the human being to renew the contract.

Islam accepts Jesus as Mary's son and as an important prophet, who, however, was not crucified and was not God's son; it is indeed a gross blasphemy to utter that "God most gracious has begotten a son!" Muslims regard the Trinity as anathema and a deliberate falsification of Allah's revelation. For Christians, God is personal and loving through Jesus; for Muslims, Allah is a transcendent, impersonal judge with some personal qualities.

Finally, while the Quran states that there should be no compulsory conversions, Muslims are called upon to be ruthless in making war on unbelievers. Loving your enemies is obviously not an Islamic concept.

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra

Only Love can heal such a scar

The wedding feast is over. The marriage feast has begun. Shannon and I were married last month. A wedding of two families, two communities and two paths. A wedding that increased my amount of children by 40%. That's a productive "I do."

The night before the wedding, Shannon had the girls at her house and the three boys (5, 7 and 8) and I had a bachelor party. A bachelor party that substituted chicken wings and cigars for popcorn and cartoons. The boys woke me up at 7 o'clock, somewhat later than usual, which I thought was a blessing. They wanted to eat breakfast in our underwear. I hadn't read the owner's manual for this request so I figured it was the right thing to do.

At 7:15 the boys wanted their suits on, but there were 9 hours to go before the ceremony. The ceremony was at the Ball's Falls Conservation Area in a large barn built in 1880. It was a beautiful setting for a beautiful day.

For the ceremony, Zion, our oldest and my best man, held my hand as we walked down the aisle first. Next came our beautiful girls, 4 and 6 years old. Then came Shannon, walked down the aisle by her two sons. Believing that this day was in God's plan, I grabbed my guitar and sang her down the aisle.

I was born; I was born to be with you.
Only love, only love can leave such a mark.
But only Love, only Love can heal such a scar.
I was born; I was born to sing for You. I didn't have a choice but to lift You up
And sing whatever song You wanted me to, I give you back my voice, from the womb.
My first cry, it was a joyful noise.
Only love, only love can leave such a mark.
But only Love, only Love can heal such a scar.

– Magnificent – U2

Our parents stood up and gave us a parental blessing on our marriage. This included Marisa's parents, a wonderful, holy gesture.

Before God and his people, I gave Shannon my vow. *Shannon, I love you. Believing that God has brought our paths together, believing that our future is in his hands, and believing that love is stronger than death, I take you to be with me. To be the mother of Zion, Jacoba and Zekijah. I take Jacob and Isaac to be my sons, our sons. I will love you and respect you. I offer you my life. My past, my present and my future.* Shannon gave her vow to me.

We then gave our vows to our children. I spoke to Shannon's sons, and she spoke to my three children. We promised our children to protect them, love them, shepherd them and respect them. We took them all individually to be ours. Then Andrew Beunk, the Lead Pastor at New Westminster CRC and officiant for the wedding, asked the children if Shannon and I could kiss. Our four-year old felt she should let the secret out and proudly told the guests that "they kiss all the time!"

Pastor Beunk spoke to us from our wedding text – Romans 8: 38 and 39.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

After Pastor Andrew's reflection, we signed the wedding register – our two legal representatives, Andrew, Shannon and I, and all our children. They were proud. So were we.

It's been an adventuresome past 4 years. I've seen glorious sadness and heart-wrenching joy. Shannon and I have both experienced that neither cancer nor a tragic car accident can separate us from his magnificent love. We know that only love can leave such a mark and that only love can heal such a scar.

Mendelt Hoekstra (mendelt.hoekstra@gmail.com) is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization operated by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives near St. Catharines, Ont.

From Toddlers to Teens

by Denise Dykstra

Getting a head start on forgiving

Our seven-year-old daughter, Tia, is a kindhearted child. But, like most kids, when she feels she's been wronged she gets angry. Recently she got so mad at her sister she wouldn't even talk to her.

Thirteen-year-old Jamie has a double bed, and she often invites her siblings to sleepovers in her room. On this particular evening she'd asked Damien to stay with her when it was actually Tia's turn.

Jamie felt bad for overlooking Tia, and she immediately apologized to her. That should have been the end of the ordeal. But for some reason Tia dug in her heels and wouldn't forgive Jamie. This went on for hours, until my husband and I stepped in.

Why did we step in? Because we felt it was important. Forgiveness is an aspect of moral development, and it's a parent's job to teach a child to distinguish right from wrong. No matter how trivial the infraction against her, Tia needed to learn to apply God's law as stated in Leviticus 19:18: "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself."

The first thing Ray and I did was reassure Tia that what she was feeling was normal. When there's conflict, people sometimes get mad, we told her. It's not unusual to want justice. Or revenge.

That doesn't mean we should avoid conflict, Ray and I explained to Tia. It just means we should be careful how we respond to it. If we handle conflict in a way that preserves relationships, we glorify God, serve others and become better people. In other words, we make progress. But if we handle conflict by getting angry and holding a grudge against someone, we get nowhere in terms of resolving issues. Plus, the pain and bitterness we'll carry with us will build up in such a way that we can no longer sustain a healthy life.

An obligation

Next Ray and I taught Tia that not only *should* we forgive, we *must*. We referred to the words of Matthew 6:14, 15: "For if you forgive others when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." We talked about what it says in Colossians 3:13: "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Tia may not have grasped the full meaning of these verses. After all, many adults can't wrap their minds around the fact that God sacrificed his own son so they could be forgiven. But our little girl did comprehend that Jesus, the one who was sacrificed, showed a forgiving spirit. And hopefully she now understands that he offers us the strength to do the same.

Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling

We must forgive by faith, out of obedience, and trust God to do the work in us that needs to be done so that the forgiveness will be complete. We are not able to forgive on our own. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to pull it off.

Ray and I explained to Tia that forgiveness is a process, and sometimes it's slow. We assured her that forgiving doesn't mean forgetting what someone's done to you, or excusing the other person. In fact, we said, forgiveness isn't for the other party at all.

When we got to this part of our explanation, Tia was very confused. "But isn't it Jamie who said sorry?" she asked. Good question. We often think of forgiveness as something that someone who has done us wrong must ask of *us*. But the truth is, forgiveness is a gift we give to ourselves. We are the ones who receive the most benefit, not the other person. Forgiving others releases us from anger and allows us to receive the healing we need.

As you can imagine, this was a deep conversation to have with a seven-year-old. And much of it went over Tia's head. Still, Ray and I feel it was worthwhile. Even if Tia remembers only one verse, she'll be miles ahead of so many adults today. That verse: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger … forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Denise Dykstra (dykstras@telus.net) lives in Edmonton, Alberta. She's a writer and mother of five.

Culture / Review

Christ @ Culture
Lloyd Rang

The quest for perfection

I have sung before an audience only once in my life. The time was 1987. The place was Redeemer College. And the song was "To All the Profs I've Loved Before." It was a parody of the Iglesias/Nelson duet "To All the Girls I've Loved Before." My friend, Jim, sang the part of Willie. He was great. I wasn't. During the third verse, I went so far off pitch, they had to send a search party after my voice.

If I had waited 10 years to make my singing debut, however, technology could have saved me – and the audience. In 1997, a company called Antares Audio Technologies came up with a new way to correct voices like mine. It's a device that bends sung notes to the nearest true semitone. It's based on the principle of the phase vocoder, but you probably know it by its trade name: Auto Tune. While Auto Tune can have a robotic sound like in Cher's 1998 song "Believe," it can also be used inconspicuously by a skilled sound technician. In the right hands, Auto Tune can make anyone sound as though they have perfect pitch.

Of course, even before Auto Tune, there has always been studio magic used to fix tiny mistakes in a singer's performance. In the analog days, technicians would slow down or stretch notes to correct them, or double-track the vocal or splice the tape. More obviously, Peter Frampton used a device similar to a vocoder (nicknamed "The Talk Box") to blend guitar and voice.

So it can be argued that there has never been anything "natural" about recorded music. Fair enough. But imagine "Thunder Road" without Bruce Springsteen's gravelly growl. Or "Moondance" without a young Van Morrison's vulnerability. Or "Southern Man" without Neil Young's plaintive and nasal whine. (When Neil Young was recording his part of "Tears Are Not Enough," producer David Foster asked him to sing "less flat." Young replied: "That's my STYLE, man.") Each of those performances is flawed. Each of those artists, if they started out today, would have their signature styles "corrected." That's just how it is, now.

So what is Auto Tune doing to music? It's making everyone sound good, for one thing. In the old days, perfect pitch was a hard thing for a performer to achieve. Now, if you can carry a tune halfway decently, the pitch correction software can do the rest.

It's also making pop musicians sound the same. When every singer is smoothed out, the differences start to disappear. If you're like me, vocal flaws are part of what make music interesting.

Human brokenness

One of my friends once pulled his car over to cry at a song. It was Curtis Stigers' raw, soulful cover of Paul Simon's "American Tune." My friend's dad had just died, and he was overcome with emotion by the honesty of Stigers' performance. It's hard to imagine anyone doing that to a Katy Perry song – even though she's engineered to be pitch perfect.

That's a bit of a contradiction, isn't it? After all, aren't we all striving to achieve perfection? Some measure of the Eden we lost?

We live in a world where surgeons can nip and tuck and sculpt the human body into something nearly flawless. Athletes can use human growth hormones to achieve performances that are inhuman. And yet – when actors, singers or athletes try to become perfect – it doesn't feel right. At some level – probably since the tower of Babel – human efforts to become perfect seem perverse, to us, somehow.

There is something inherently human and beautiful in our brokenness. The poetry, drama, and cinema of the world would be empty without it. And when we raise our imperfect human voices in praise of God – well – in my books there is no more beautiful and honest sound in the world.

It seems to me that when we reach upwards – not in our strength but in our weakness – it is the knowledge of that very imperfection itself that draws us closer to God.

Overpowered by microphones

Which brings me back to that performance in 1987. And, in a very round-about sort of way, to the subject of worship. Despite that devastating onstage experience, I love to sing. And when I'm in a congregation and I can hear the voices of my fellow singers around me, I belt it out with pure joy and zero talent.

> People led by microphoned singers don't sing along. Not like they used to.

But in more and more churches lately, worship leaders with microphones are taking over. Don't get me wrong – they sound great. Some of them sound close to perfect. But over them, I can't hear myself sing. So I don't.

I don't think I'm alone. Look around at your congregation sometime. People led by microphoned singers don't sing along. Not like they used to.

When I was a kid in Dunnville, if the right hymn came along, our congregation of farmers and blue-collar immigrants used to blast the roof off the church. That's a rare sound, these days.

I have a theory about that. When music stops being something people create themselves, they don't sing. They listen.

And when you take that creative act away from a service, what are you left with? Church becomes a pastor talking AT you, an elder praying FOR you, and a musician singing INSTEAD of you.

In short, the entire act of worship becomes something that *happens* to you, not something that requires your *participation*.

I think worship leaders should think about that.

Like the introduction of Auto Tune into popular music, the introduction of amplified praise teams is slowly making sacred music sound better, more polished and more perfect. But I wonder if the praise isn't more pleasing – and the singing a lot more robust – when we can hear ourselves, in all our brokenness, actually doing it.

Lloyd Rang (Lloyd.rang@rogers.com) is a member of Rehoboth CRC in Bowmanville, Ontario.

Praise psalm to the God of gardens

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

From a fledgling, uninformed gardener who once transplanted a weed thinking it was a worthy flower, to a learning-by-my-mistakes enthusiast, I've developed a passion for gardening that I was unaware of twenty-five years ago. When we bought our home in 1985, it was surrounded by several gardens. Eventually my newfound passion envisioned gardens where my children's sandbox used to be, along the bare patch by the north fence and behind the house where only rocks and clay resided. The visions became reality when I dislodged heavy clay and filled the void with composted soil and manure. My family sometimes commented that if I didn't stop, there wouldn't be any grass left. So, I made a promise to my husband. No more gardens – at least, not this year.

My passion for gardening took me by surprise and made me ponder why I love to garden. Many reasons are possible – the love of beauty, physical exercise, the delight of watching things grow and the space for emotional rest. All of these are true to my experience of gardening. But there is one more reason, foundational to the others.

In *The Fragrance of God*, Vigen Guroian explains, "No earthly garden ever is just an earthly garden, for God is in the Garden. Every garden is an image and a sacrament of the One Garden, our lost home of innocence, henceforth our inheritance" (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006, pg. 49).

God is in my garden. Ultimately, that is why I find pleasure in it. Often my spirit soars when I hear bees buzzing, when I smell bergamot's pungent perfume and basil's refreshing fragrance, when I feel the sun on my skin and a breeze on my brow, when I taste a juicy red cherry tomato freshly picked or when I see butterflies sipping nectar, swaying on butterfly bushes' pink and purple plumes. Gratitude and awe crystallize into adoration. Based on the format of Psalm 136, I wrote a psalm in praise of the God of gardens.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
His love endures forever.
Give thanks to God, my Redeemer, whose saving grace causes pine trees to grow instead of thorn bushes, the myrtle instead of briers (Isa. 55:13).
His compassion endures forever.
Give thanks to God, the Gardener, who prunes my life by cutting off every branch in me that bears no fruit so that I will be more fruitful (John. 15:1-2).
His mercy endures forever.
Give thanks to God, the Creator.
His originality endures forever.
To him alone who created soil, water, light, plants, trees, flowers and shrubs,
His ingenuity endures forever.
To him who relishes wildflowers – swamp milkweed, white turtlehead, spotted joe-pye-weed, blue-eyed grass and Ohio goldenrod,
His creativity endures forever.
To him who shaped trees of all kinds – butternut walnut, bur oak, largetooth aspen and maple,
His majesty endures forever.
To him who thought of bees and the flowers and shrubs they need to survive – butterfly weed, Russian sage, Echinacea, and phlox,
His attentiveness endures forever.
To him who provides a refuge from the summer heat for wild rabbits under burgeoning Cranesbill Geranium and large-leafed Rudbeckia,
His creaturely care endures forever.
To him who causes food to grow in vegetable gardens – carrots, beans, potatoes, celery, onions, eggplants, peppers, squash and pumpkins,
His regenerative power endures forever.
To him who created bodies which can walk, bend, lift, carry, dig and plant in order to cultivate gardens,
His splendour endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of gardens – large and small, wild and cultivated.
His love endures forever.

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema (sonyavf55@hotmail.com) is a freelance writer living in St. Catharines, ON.

Leave Your Sleep by Natalie Merchant

Reviewed by Walter Miedema

Leave Your Sleep is Natalie Merchant's first album in seven years and takes its name from a Mother Goose rhyme. This is appropriate, because this ambitious double disk album takes its inspiration from poems and rhymes written for children to which Ms. Merchant has been introducing her young daughter over the last seven years. All of the 26 tracks on the album are musical arrangements by Merchant of some of her favorites of these poems written for children.

The poems run the gamut from zany nonsense, as in Mervyn Peake's "It Makes a Change" (its about a whale in a nighty) to the seriousness of a child dealing with grief in Gerard Manley Hopkins' "Spring and Fall: to a young Child." Each arrangement compliments the mood of the poem. The arrangements of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Land of Nod" as well as the above Hopkins poem are reminiscent of the orchestration from Merchant's *Ophelia* album, but there is a wide variety of atmospheres on this album.

This diversity is due to the more than one hundred artists that Merchant has worked with to record this album. Some of the more high profile participants include Wynton Marsalis, The Klezmatics, The Fairfield Four (who contribute humorous verbal ad-libs to the bluesy "The Peppery Man") and the Ditty Bops.

The musical arrangements are lush and layered but do not overwhelm Merchant's singing. Her articulation is controlled, and her voice is rich and full without being overly emotional. Merchant is playful and sombre to degrees, but the difference is very subtle. Her delivery respects the original verse of the poems. Merchant never inhabits a character in any of the cases where the lyrics contain a first person narration. It is clear that she enjoys the act of performing these songs, but it is possible that the responsibility of heading such an ambitious endeavour as this album may have limited her freedom to play with her own performance. A sense of play is present mostly through the music and backing vocals. That being said, the quality of the performance is undeniably of a high calibre. Those familiar with Merchant's music would expect no different.

A couple of tracks also have obviously ethnic allusions, and for these tracks Merchant includes appropriate ethnic instruments and vocalizations. The arrangement of the traditional English rhyme "The King of China's Daughter" includes an *erhu* (a kind of two stringed Chinese violin) and a *dizi* flute, and Lynda Huntley Sigourney's "Indian Names" includes various Native American instruments and singing styles.

The poems Ms. Merchant has chosen form a kind of mosaic image of various aspects of childhood. There is wonder, silliness, learning, discovery, sadness and hope, a belief that anything is possible as well as the brutal truth of coming to terms with the disappointments of reality. Childhood is all about learning how to encounter the world around you. Ms. Merchant has selected quite a number of good guides for us to do this, whether we are experiencing childhood at this moment, reflecting on it or even trying to regain a sense of it.

The discs come in a thick, hardcased booklet that represents each poem as a book spine on its cover. Included in the book is each of the poems in their entirety, as they were originally published, as well as roughly 500 words of information on the life of each poet and what attracted Ms. Merchant to each poem. A number of the poets were well known at their time but now languish in relative obscurity. Most of these write ups are accompanied by a black and white photograph of the poet as well.

What is clear about this album is that even in the most relaxed and free tracks the album is characterized by a strict professionalism. Ms. Merchant clearly loves and respects the poets whose work she is arranging, and the music does much to enhance the emotion present in the poems.

For fans of Ms. Merchant this is a must-have album. Her creativity and musical competency are on full display. The takes on the poems are original and varied. However, as this and her previous album were not fully original material, I look forward to the next time she records music with her own lyrics, as she has proved herself a talented lyricist in the past.

Walter Miedema is a recent graduate of Calvin Theological Seminary, currently on internship at Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

THE PUBLIC SQUARE
Harry Antonides

Buck up, Europe

Europe is not aging gracefully. More than half a century after it began taking the steps that eventually resulted in the European union, it is at best a vast market without a consistent military or political personality – and one that matters less and less in world affairs. Henry Kissinger's old witticism about Europe's having no phone number is more relevant than ever. What happened? (Pascal Bruckner, "Europe's Guilty Conscience: Self-hatred Is Paralyzing the Continent," *City Journal*, Summer 2010)

With these provocative lines, Pascal Bruckner, French writer and philosopher, began his analysis of what ails the sick European giant. But he did not write, as many now do, with denunciation and contempt, but more like a caring doctor who treats his patients with respect and professional excellence. (The following is a summary of Bruckner's article.)

Bruckner cites a number of factors that have laid Europe low, such as nationalist egoism and predominance of the two major founders, France and Germany. But more than any of these reasons, he thinks that since the end of World War II, "Europe has been tormented by a need to repent."

That felt need to repent of past sins (slavery, imperialism, fascism, communism) has morphed into a destructive self-loathing, which explains, for example, that the majority of Europeans felt that on 9/11, the Americans got what they deserved. The same attitude emerged at the time of the Madrid and London attacks in 2004 and 2005

Europe is a paradox

Bruckner admits that Europe has engendered monsters, but at the same time it has made it possible to slay monsters. European history is a succession of paradoxes. Take colonialism: insofar as the colonial powers introduced the subject colonies to the laws of the mother country, they also taught them the idea of a nation's right to govern itself.

He reminds us that modern Europe was not begun with hopeful enthusiasm but with a "weariness of slaughter," imprinted in the memory of Verdun and Auschwitz. Europeans want to escape the furies of our age and confine themselves to the administration of economic and social matters. Europe is a sorrow that, he predicts, will soon amount to little except "the residue of abandoned dreams."

He writes that a "civilization responsible for the worst atrocities as well as the most sublime accomplishments cannot understand itself solely in terms of guilt…. We now live on self-denunciation…as if our only duty were expiation, endless expiation."

Bruckner thinks that the passing on of a collective guilt from generation to generation is insidious, because contrition cannot define a political order. He writes that history is not divided between evil nations and angelic ones but "between democracies, which recognize their faults, and dictatorships, which drape themselves in the robes of martyrs."

Europe is a mixture of the good and the bad. It is the Holocaust, but also the destruction of Nazism; the Gulag, but also the fall of the wall…. In the end, freedom prevailed over oppression, which is why life is better in Europe than on many other continents.

Europe no longer believes in evil but only in misunderstandings to be resolved by discussion and dialogue. She no longer has enemies but only partners. If she is nice to extremists, she thinks, they will be nice to her, and she will be able to disarm their aggressiveness and soften them up…. [W]e have no armies that would be able to defend our frontiers if we were so unlucky as to be attacked; after the Haitian crisis, Brussels could not dispatch even a few thousand men to help disaster victims.

Peace at any price?

Bruckner asserts that in its worst moments, Europe seeks peace at any price, even what Saint Thomas Aquinas called a bad peace – "one that consecrates injustice, arbitrary power, and terror, a detestable peace heavy with vicious consequences." It is selfish in being content only with its own freedom. It is willing to live with a bad conscience because that is less burdensome than to assume responsibility.

In practice, that means that we are satisfied with tranquil impotence, preferring to live "in a peaceful hell." We are willing to accept blame for old crimes so as to escape responsibility for current ones. But warns Bruckner, by preferring injustice to disorder, "the Old World risks being swept away by chaos, the victim of renunciation mistaken for wisdom."

Bruckner concludes by holding up the prospect that Europe is made over into a continental Switzerland, that is, a peaceful, neutral, self-indulgent island in the midst of a chaotic and turbulent world. He concludes:

In that case, our continent, aging and in decline, would be reduced to a high-class sanatorium – ready to be dismembered piece by piece by all predators and to renounce its freedom just to gain a little more quiet and comfort.

This hard-hitting and honest analysis of the sickness of Europe is at once deeply disturbing yet encouraging that such a voice is still heard "from under the rubble." It deserves the widest possible distribution.

Harry Antonides (hantonides@sympatico.ca) retired as director of the former Work Research Foundation. He lives in Willowdale, Ontario.

Hymnal age in extremis

Curt Gesch

The great age(s) of the hymnal is ending. Nevertheless, like monks copying manuscripts that only a few will read, the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church of America have begun a new collection of "heart songs," psalms, and hymns.

In Protestant history, the Reformation was an age of reformulating worship. Luther wrote and commissioned hymns (gezangboeks), Calvin concentrated on Psalms but included a few scriptural versifications of other passages, and the Anabaptists wrote dirges and laments, reflecting the persecution they experienced at the hands of the rest of Christianity. (It was the best and worst of times.)

In England, the Victorians rewrote the hymnbook and psalters, often with predictable harmonisations and free poetic texts. This caused no end of trouble in Scotland, where Dwight L. Moodie's crusade was controversial because of the hymn-singing and organ accompaniment. It was the last kick of exclusive a capella, unison psalmnody.

The decline of the traditional hymnal

In the twentieth century, hymnals were produced by denominations, rather than branches of Protestantism, but they were challenged by the development of gospel choruses which were sometimes excluded from worship as lacking dignity or complexity. Other times – as in the original Trinity Hymnal – they were told to "know their place" in a section called "Hymns for Informal Occasions."

As the century progressed and popular music became disseminated via recordings and radio (ironically becoming less populist), churches were forced to adapt. They looked especially at the folk idiom and began including early "Christian folk" classics like "Seek Ye First" and "This Is the Day."

Coincidental with the rise of popular music was the attempt by major composers to improve hymnals with traditional melodies (cf. especially Ralph Vaughn Williams in the U.K.) or with new tunes and lyrics. Great Welsh composers like the Parrys were succeeded by the likes of Eric Routley, Fred Kaan, Margaret Clarkson, Carol Doran and Thomas Troeger.

By the last quarter of the century, denominations produced a host of new hymnals: The Psalter Hymnal (grey: 1986) of the CRC; Rejoice in the Lord (RCA); a new Trinity Hymnal (for the OPC, PCA); The Presbyterian Hymnal (UPUSA), and so on. Fading denominational loyalties concurrent with the surging power of mass media meant that, when congregations bought hymnals at all, they were likely to purchase those produced by independent publishers, edited by former "folk Christian" composers.

The scene today

The question of "which hymnal" became less and less of a discussion item by the turn of the century. When new Christian Contemporay Music (CCM) and "Praise and Worship" music became legally available through CCI licensing agreements, many congregations threw out the hymnal altogether.

Whether they also discarded responsibility for considering historical, aesthetic and theological concerns is a matter still debated by formally-trained musicians, those who read notes (not chords) and grumpy older people who still use hymnals or psalters.

So we come to a decision made by two Reformed denominations – the CRC and the RCA – to co-produce a hymnal. By happy irony, the choice of singing in holy worship was one of the causes of the original division into two bodies. (The fledgling group that became the CRC wanted to pursue near-universal use of the psalters and discouraged hymn-singing.) Today, the two bodies are agreed on many matters that formerly separated them, including the use of a common hymnal. And while the usage of printed, bound you-can-pick-them-up-and-touch-them books is seemingly in decline, preliminaries studies show that enough congregations in the two denominations will purchase the new hymnal to make the matter a self-financing project.

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...Bert DenBoggende

Read Bert's full review in the June 28 issue of *CC*

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In thankfulness for God's abundant blessings

Grace Zee

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RATES: All personal and family announcements: $6.00 per square inch. **rose@christiancourier.ca**
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Anniversary

1960 September 23 2010

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
Joshua 24:15

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Their **50th Wedding Anniversary**.

We thank God for his Faithfulness to you and his Blessings through 50 years.

With love from your children and grandchildren:
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Joshua, Aaron and Scott

Gerald and Colleen Bierling, *Hamilton, ON*
Jason and Vanessa

Marvin and Margherita Bierling, *Chatham, ON*
Corina, Alyson and Ada

Tammy and Mike Hoving, *Holland Landing, ON*
Jacob, Daniel, Naomi and Rachael

Home address: 19400 Dufferin Street
Newmarket ON L3Y 4V9
louis.bierling@sympatico.ca

Obituaries

Ulrem Brampton
August 11, 1914 July 16, 2010

The Lord called home our father, grandfather and great-grandfather

Reinder Vandyk

He was loved and will be missed by his wife Gre of 73 years

and his children:
Ieka & John
John & Catherine
Jerry & Anneke
Martha
Bert & Barb
Pieta
as well as 23 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren

Address: Mrs R. Vandyk
FM 124 - 7900 McLaughlin Rd S
Brampton ON L6Y 5AY

Johanna Willemina (Kappers) Zandbergen (Joan)

While one of her daughters sang to her "To the Hills I Lift My Eyes" the Lord came and took her home.
Predeceased by her husband Fred in 1988.
She spent the last 10 weeks at a nursing home where she would be taken to chapel on Sundays by her family. Always having been busy for the Lord, she sat in her wheelchair two weeks before she passed away greeting the people coming to chapel.

Loving mother of: Janny & Arie Geurkink
Freda & Harold Tibben
Henry & Hennie Zandbergen
Dini & Nick Frans
Alice & Jim Van Doorn
Richard & Yettie Zandbergen
Bill &CobyZandbergen
Fred & Mattie Zandbergen
John & Theresa Zandbergen
JoAnn Wilma & Bill Hoftyzer
and 36 grandchildren, 65 great-grandchildren & 12 great-great-grandchildren

Gone before her are two sisters, a brother, a young son, Rutger, 2 grandsons, 2 granddaughters, a granddaughter-in-law, and 1 great-grandson

Correspondence: Janny and Arie Geurkink
10671 Broken Second Rd RR 2, Iroquois ON K0E 1K0

Personal

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Event

Leendert Kooij and his O.C.M.A. Choir will do a benefit concert for Eurovangelism/ EuroAid at the Hebron CRC in **Whitby**, on **October 20**
We invite you to join us for a great evening! For more information, call 1-866-630-6301

Job Opportunity

For all job ads recently published in Christian Courier, go to our website, christiancourier.ca, and click on Reader Resources > job ads

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Worldwide Christian Schools
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Phone: 866.360.4274 | 905.387.9927
Email: canada@wwcs.org

Full job description is available at ***www.wwcs.ca.***

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Diaconal Ministries invites you to attend a **Day of Encouragement** - October 16, 2010
Come to celebrate God through worship and enjoy training in ministry and learning from others at Hamilton District Christian High, **Ancaster**. The theme for the day is "Fan the Flame." Many different workshops are being prepared for you! Contact your deacons for more information or to register,visit www.diaconalministries.com

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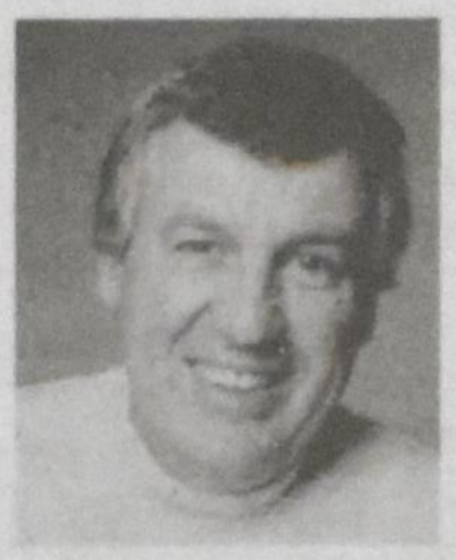

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		5	8		1	4		
	4		9		7		3	
8								6
		8	6	4	3	1		
		2	7	9	8	5		
4								2
	7		1		9		8	
		3	2		4	6		

Elim Investment Opportunities

Established by the Elim Housing Society in 1995, Elim Village is located on 20 acres in the heart of Surrey's Fleetwood area. Based and operated on Christian principles, Elim's vision is to provide various levels of quality care for seniors.

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ELIM Village

For more information regarding investment with Elim Village, contact **Terry-Lynn Dryfhout** at **tld@elimvillage.com** or call **604.583.3546 Ext 4031**
Visit our website at **www.ElimVillage.com**

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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct 16 Diaconal Ministries invites you to attend a Day of Encouragement: come to celebrate God through worship and enjoy training in ministry and learning from others at Hamilton District Christian High, **Ancaster**. The theme for the day is "Fan the Flame." Many different workshops are being prepared for you! This day is open to everyone! Contact your deacons for more information or visit www.diaconalministries.com to register.

Oct 16,17 Duncan Christian School 50th Anniversary. Contact: development@duncanchristianschool.ca or 250-746-3654 ext. 292 See ad.

Oct 17 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Ralph Koops will be preaching.

Oct 20 Leendert Kooij and his O.C.M.A. Choir will do a benefit concert for Eurovangelism/EuroAid at the Hebron Christian Reformed Church in **Whitby**. We invite you to join us for a great evening! Please call us at 1-866-630-6301 for more info.

Oct 23 Leendert Kooij and his O.C.M.A. Choir will do a benefit concert for Eurovangelism/EuroAid at St. George's Anglican Church in **Guelph** We invite you to join us for a great evening! Please call us at 1-866-630-6301 for more info.

Oct 29 Pastor Herman Praamsma retirement celebration at Heritage Fellowship CRC, Brampton, ON, For information contact L. van Ginkel at 905-797-3196 or Lvanginkel@sympatico.ca See ad.

Nov 5 Christian Festival Concert 7:30 pm, Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**. See ad.

Heritage Fellowship CRC of Brampton
announces the retirement of

PASTOR REV.HERMAN PRAAMSMA

after 40 years of service.

Pastor Praamsma and his wife Diane faithfully served the churches of Bethel, Waterdown; Rehoboth,Toronto; Maranatha, Edmonton; Fellowship, Toronto; Correctional Institute, Brampton; Immanuel, Brampton, and for the last twelve years at Heritage Fellowship CRC.

An evening of thanksgiving is planned for
Friday, October 29, 2010.
Rev. Praamsma plans to preach his farewell sermon in the morning service of Sunday, Oct. 31, 2010. A coffee social will follow.

For information contact L. van Ginkel at 905-797-3196
or Lvanginkel@sympatico.ca

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Leendert Kooij, Director

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50th Anniversary

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1:00 – 4:00 pm Chapel, Tours, Reception
6:00 – 9:00 pm Reception & Sports Event

Saturday, October 17:
7:30 – 10:00 am Pancake Breakfast & Tours
5:30 - pm - Banquet - $30.00
7:30 pm – Program - $10.00

CELEBRATE THE FABRIC OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

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Travel

Impressions from Kenya

View of part of the Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kenya.

Derek Schuurman

As I write this I am surrounded by banana plants, acacia trees, and a colourful array of bright tropical flowers while serenaded by the chatter and songs of exotic birds. But this peaceful garden is surrounded on all sides by a fence with a gate that is guarded at night. My wife and I have spent nearly two weeks in Kenya visiting my sister-in-law and her children in the outskirts of the bustling city of Nairobi.

Our first trip to east Africa has given us a snapshot of a beautiful country. We made a trip to Lake Nakuru National Park, famous for its shoreline which is painted pink by countless flamingos. We saw white rhinos, once nearly extinct, peacefully grazing near the lake. Coming up the crest of a hill we encountered a herd of cape buffalo that challenged our 4-wheel drive vehicle with piercing gazes, communicating their disgust at our presence. We enjoyed watching elegant giraffes peacefully nibbling on a buffet of acacia trees, a warthog who ignored us as he foraged for food, and small herds of gazelles grazing throughout the park. And there were the ever-curious monkeys and mischievous baboons. Our safari ended with spotting an elegant lioness who was lazily draped over a fallen tree, her powerful front paws dangling limply as she rested. (After seeing the wildlife, visitors can enjoy eating wildlife at the Carnivore restaurant in Nairobi which serves a wide variety of animal meats.)

Many challenges

The country is also one of stark contrasts. In the city of Nairobi, spacious Land Rovers and Mercedes sedans share the road with flocks of pedestrians and ubiquitous small-passenger vans called "matatus" packed with 14 or more passengers. The city has rows of palatial, gated mansions and a lush golf course just a short drive from Kibera, one of the largest slums in Africa. Large modern shopping malls stand a short distance from shabby kiosks, and roadside vendors who approach vehicles to sell anything from sandals to yoghurt. Beautiful landscaping is framed by imposing gates and fences guarded by watchmen and men with large guns patrol malls and entrances to banks.

Two zebras at Lake Nakuru National Park.

During our stay in Kenya we were able to observe an historic event – a referendum held on August 4 to accept a new constitution. As the vote approached, there were concerns about unrest as memories of the violence surrounding the 2007 presidential election were still fresh in the minds of many people. Several leaders took to the airwaves to promote peace and calm as the country approached the historic vote. There was vigorous debate between the yes-side (or the "greens") and the no-side (the "reds"). Some politicians were accused of being "watermelons" – green on the outside but really red on the inside. Some church leaders even weighed into the debate, citing concerns about a clause in the constitution which had implications for abortion, while others were opposed due to issues surrounding land rights. In the end, the new constitution was ratified by over two-thirds of those who voted. Now that the new constitution will become the law of the land, Kenyans must begin the difficult task of implementing the new constitution in a way that provides justice for all.

A Christian presence

We also had a chance to visit a thriving branch of Nairobi Chapel which, as it turned out, was celebrating its fifth birthday on our first Sunday in Kenya. We joined hundreds of worshippers under a large outdoor tent for a special service of celebration which lasted several hours. People sang songs of praise exuberantly. Although the service was mostly in English, we stumbled along with the words of Swahili songs that were projected up front and awkwardly tried to mimic the rhythmic motions that naturally accompanied the singing of the praise team and the congregation.

Kenya is largely a Christian nation, and references to faith are not uncommon in the public square. We watched an interview on television with a government official who spoke eloquently, invoking biblical phrases to emphasize the need to eliminate corruption and punish those who "reap where they did not sow." Kenyan Prime Minister Odinga compared the journey to the new constitution with the journey the Israelites took to the land of Canaan. On a visit to an elephant orphanage, a park employee speaking to a gathered crowd described their work as a response to God's command to look after the animals. Christian education was also evident throughout the country. We visited a couple of Christian elementary schools and Daystar University, a Christian university with almost 4000 students.

Our trip to Kenya opened our eyes to an incredibly beautiful country, illustrating the diversity of plants, animals, peoples and cultures that can be found in this world. It is a country of many challenges and contrasts, but one which also shows signs of hope.

Derek Schuurman is a professor at Redeemer University College. This month he has taken a vacation from his normal theme of "technology" to describe a recent trip to Kenya.

ODDS & TRENDS

A century of collections: 1910-2010

Could you live without your cell phone? On July 24 and 25, the Bell Homestead Museum, the original residence of Alexander Graham Bell and the site of the first Canadian telephone sales office, celebrated its 100th Anniversary. Highlights included the launch of an exhibit of selected letters of the Bell family, a gala dinner and concert and a play, *Winning Mabel*, based on Bell family correspondence.

Although the official 100th Anniversary celebrations are over, the Bell Homestead Museum, 91 Tutela Heights Road, Brantford, is a great stop on a day trip. The Bell Telephone Memorial Association deeded the house and property to the City of Brantford. Completely renovated and packed with audio-visual displays, antiques and historical artifacts, the museum offers tours by costumed guides.

Call 519-756-6220 or go to www.bellhomestead.ca

Cell phone tapping device

Do you ever worry about what you say on your cell phone? Recently hacker and hobbyist Chris Paget demonstrated at a DefCon conference in Las Vegas that he could intercept and record some kinds of cell phone calls. The device he created is called an IMSI catcher and refers to the unique Mobile Subscriber Identity numbers that cell phones use to identify themselves to their networks. Previously available only to law enforcement at a significant expense, the device cost Paget a mere $1500 to create. He wanted to demonstrate that GSM (second generation cellular technology) is no longer secure. His goal, he said, is to spur new adoption of systems that are more secure. There are 3 billion GSM users around the world. The GSM Association responded to the demonstration by noting that it has never offered a guarantee of completely secure communication. iPhones that run on 3G or 4G networks (third and fourth generation) are protected, as well as Black Berry phones which apply encryption.

Cell phone connects Israeli and Palestinian friends

The ubiquitous role of the cell phone in natural disasters and human conflict has become a media staple. The story of Izzeldin Abuelaish and Shlomi Eldar's cell phone conversation has touched an international public.

Today Izzeldin Abuelaish, Palestinian doctor, lives in Toronto with his five children. On January 16, 2009, three of his daughters and a niece were killed by an Israeli rocket in Gaza. Another daughter, another niece, and his brother were gravely wounded. Abuelaish, desperate to save his family members, contacted his friend, Shlomi Eldar, an Israeli TV anchor. Eldar answered Abuelaish on his cell phone while live on air. The frantic conversation was captured on videotape and later posted to YouTube. Eldar jumped into action and was successful in convincing his government to permit an ambulance to transport Abuelaish's wounded relatives to an Israeli hospital for treatment.

Abuelaish's book, *I Shall Not Hate*, is his effort to promote the kind of friendship and understanding that transcends ethnicity and history: "I believe everything happens for a reason, and that even my family's loss serves a purpose. The deaths of my daughters opened the Israelis' eyes to the suffering on the other side. I believe there is a better future for us because of what this tragedy has taught. The past is only there to learn from."

Tidbit:

Did you know that if you modify the firmware of an Apple product like an iPod Touch or an iPhone it's called *jailbreaking*?

Cathy Smith